DIRECTIONS

FOR

A GODLY LIFE: ESPECIALLY FOR Communicating at the Lords Table.

INTENDED FIRST FOR private use; now published for the good of those who desire the safty of their owne soules, and shall be pleased to make use thereof.

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The fifth Edition.

PSAL. 69. 33.

Seek yee after God and your soule shall live.

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TO THE HONOVRABLE *GENTLEMAN* Mr LORENZO CARY, Son to the R. Honourable Vicount *Faulkland* Lord Deputy of *Ireland.*

WORTHY SIR,

SInce the time that it first pleased Your Honourable Father to cõmend you unto the religious government of this Colledge, wherin you now liue, your carriage hath bin so sweet & lovely, that it hath wonne, I

dare say, the heart of each member thereof to a readinesse of respecting this your goodnesse, as in word so in deed, according to their severall places and dignities. Neither could I suffer my selfe, standing in a more neare relation than any of the rest unto you, to come short in the performance of this office; Wherefore I here offer unto your religious meditation this ensuing Treatise, collected and composed first for private use, but now published, not to gaine the applause of any (from which my owne unworthinesse sufficiently checks me) but chiefly for these two respects; first to testifie that love, which I both owe unto you and

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am ready to make good; Secōdly, and more principally, to invite you to a due consideration of those holy duties therein contained, that by a seasonable knowledge of the same, your actions may be ths more carefully ordered, and Gods name in the faithfull practise thereof more fully glorified. The subject is a matter not of humane learning, but of Gods service; and thereof a part without exception, the greatest; the due receiving of the holy Communion. A duty, I confesse, better known, thē well considered; more often thought on, then sincerely practis'd: if it were not so, bad actions would not be so commonly privileg'd by the

greatnesse of the Agents, as now they are; but they to whom God hath given most honour here, would ever think it their greatest glory to honour him most againe by their faithfull service unto him. And good reason why they should, if they remember that to whom God hath given most, of them he requireth most again; yea such, who have the precedency of others in place and dignity, may doe well to consider, that, in making a cõscience of matters of Religion and leading their lives according to the rules thereof, they doe not only provide well for the salvation of their own soules, but give a good occasion to others also, while they happily provoke them

them to the practise of the same duties by their good examples: which are ever held as lively precepts, and serve for a secret reproofe to an ingennous inferiour, when he shall see himselfe defective in that, wherein his betters have gone before him. Let the Honourable & Mighty thus remember how far they shall honour God by a religious life, & then they cannot but acknowledge that it is their glorious freedome to be his humble Servants. Others, if they please, may take notice of this perswasion; and perhaps they would, if I were not unworthy to advise them: but now I speak to you alone, whom I well know willing, as freely to make use of others help, so truly

ly to accept of this from mee. Your own happinesse you must confesse, with thanks to God, that by his providence you live in that Society, whose Religion is as firme as undefiled, where you cannot say, you want the rule either of loving precepts or example; according unto which you have already joined with the rest in a religious cõmunicating at the Lords Table. My desire is to peswade you to a constant perseverance in what you have so wel begun; that so devoting your tender yeares, with those which follow unto the service of th' Almighty, you may againe from him receive & fully enioy his daily blessings, which doth ever attend on those that truly seeke him.

him. Some Meditations, which perhaps may serve for your direction, I here present unto your view; in which I freely acknowledge almost nothing mine (to prevent the censure of a curious Reader) but onely the labour of composing; this I now commend to you, and you unto the blessed providence of the most Highest, resting ever

Yours truly

in the Lord

HENRY TOZER.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE DUE RECEIVING OF THE Holy Communion.

CHAP. I.

What a Sacrament is, and how many there be.

A Sacrament is an outward visible signe of an inward and invisible grace; ordained by God, whereby he doth seale unto us his covenant

venant of grace made in the bloud of Christ, & we againe testifie our faith and piety towards him: so that it is both a signe in respect of the thing signified, and a seale in respect of the covenant sealed unto us. The word Sacrament doth properly signifie an oath, whereby Souldiers bound themselves unto their Generall; whence it is taken to signifie that obligation, whereby wee tye our selves to the blessed and sweet service of Iesus Christ: for hereby we, as Christs Souldiers, first binde our selves by promise of obedience to fight under the Lords banner against the world, the flesh & the

the Divell; Secondly, we put on the cognisance & Armes, the Colours and marke of Christ, by professing our faith in him, that so it may appeare unto the world to whom we doe belong.

Now Sacraments are of two sorts. First, of the Old Testament, which were two. First, Circumcision; secondly, the Passeover. The first was ordained for a signe of entrance into the Covenant; the second for an assurance of confirmation of, and continuance in the same: both which are now abolished, & in stead of them wee now have the Sacraments of the New Testament, which are like

likewiſe two. firſt, Baptiſme anſwerable to Circumciſion; ſecondly, the Lords Supper to the Paſſeover: both ſignified by that water and bloud, which iſſued out of the ſide of Chriſt, when it was pierced by the Souldiers on the Croſſe. Of theſe the firſt is called the Sacrament of our Nativity or entrance, becauſe by it we are aſſured that wee are received into the Covenant of Grace, and ſo are regenerate and belong to the flock of CHRIST: the ſecond is called the Sacrament of our growth & perſeverance, whereby wee grow up in Chriſt, and are aſſured that wee ſhall be ſtill kept in this eſtate.

eſtate. So that both are neceſſary; the one to aſſure us of our entrance into, and the other of our continuance in the eſtate of Grace; for although that Grace once conferr'd cannot be loſt, yet our aſſurance doth often want ſtrengthning by reaſon of our manifold temptations, againſt which we are comforted by the remembrance of Chriſts death and paſſion: which doth alſo teach us why the Sacrament of Baptiſme is received but once, and the Lords Supper often; becauſe our birth is ſignified by our Baptiſme, and we can bee borne but once; but wee daily ſtand in need of foode

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and ſtrengthning, and therefore wee often receive the Supper of the Lord, that our ſoules may be nouriſhed unto life everlaſting.

CHAP. II.

What the Lords Supper is.

THat we may rightly underſtand the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, wee muſt know 2. things. 1. what it is; 2, what belongs to the due receiving of it.

For the firſt; the Lords Supper is a Sacrament, conſiſting of Bread and Wine lawfully conſecrated and diſtributed; inſtituted by Chriſt him-

himſelfe for a continuall remembrance of the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt, and the benefits which wee receive thereby.

This inſtitution was at Chriſts laſt Supper after hee had eaten the Paſſeover with his Diſciples; ſo that it is called a Supper in reſpect of the time of the inſtitution; and the Lords Supper in reſpect of the Author, the Lord Chriſt: as alſo in reſpect of the end thereof, which is partly to ſet forth the Lords Death, & the ſpirituall food therein received, namely the body and bloud of Chriſt himſelfe.

In this Sacrament we muſt con-

consider two things. 1. The parts: 2, The end.

The parts are two. First the outward Signes. Secondly, the Things signified. The Signes are either representing, namely, the Elements themselves: or applying signes, which are the actions about those Elements.

The elements are 2. Bread and Wine: not Bread only, but both; according to Christs institution: and that asunder, not the Bread dipt in the Wine, as some will have it; because Christs bloud was shed out of his body for our sinnes, and wee are to receive these Signes as representing Christ, not whole, but

but wounded and pierced.

Now Christ chose these Elements before any other, because they best serve to set forth Christs Body & Bloud; for as Bread by divers breakings and pressings comes to bee perfect, yea the chiefest food of our bodies, still giving a good rellish, when other things doe not, and is also more common to all, than any other. So the body of Christ by many torments was made the chiefe nourishment of our soules, remaining alwaies most sweet and pleasant, and common to all that can receive him by faith; and as Wine doth cherish and comfort us, satisfie our thirst,

purge

purge away many corrupt humours, and maketh us bold and adventrous: so the bloud of Christ revives and glads our drooping soules, satisfieth our spiritiuall thirst, purgeth us from all our sinnes, & makes us couragious against all feare of our enemy the Divell: Againe, as bread is made of many graines into one loafe, and wine of many grapes into one cup: so wee partaking thereof, and of Christ, by faith are made one with him as our head, & also one among our selves as members of his body; thus of the Elements.

The Actions in this Sacrament are of 2. sorts. 1. of the Minister.

Minister. 2. of the Communicants. The actions of the Minister are these.

1, Setting apart, & 2 blessing of the Elements, whereby is signified, that Christ Iesus was set apart and sanctified for us, as it is *Ioh.* 17. 19. 3. breaking and powring out, and 4, distributing to the Communicants; whereby is signified that Christs Body was crucified, and his Bloud shed, and that the benefits thereof are offered unto us, if wee have faith to receive them, as it is *Ioh.* 3. 15. *Hee was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should have life everlasting.*

The actions of the Communi-

municants are two.

1. Taking.

2. Eating and drinking.

By which is signified that they, which receive benefit by Christ, must receive him by faith applying his merits to their own soules, as *Ioh.* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them hee gave power to become the sons of God, even to thē which believe on his name.*

Thus of the signes; the thing signified is the Body & Bloud of Christ, with the benefits, which wee receive thereby; namely the strengthning and refreshing of our soules in the remission of our sinnes: and this wee receive, not of the Minister (for hee gives

gives onely the signes) but of God himselfe, apprehending the same by our faith; for Christ is not signifi'd in these signes as in a picture, but exhibited unto us; being himselfe present in the Sacrament, though not corporally to the Bread and Wine, yet spiritually to our faith; for though *his Body be in Heaven and must there remaine untill the last day*, as it is Act. 3. 2. yet we may feed on him spiritually by faith, by applying his death and passion unto our sinfull soules: so that there is one union betweene Christ and the Elements, which is Symbolicall; and another between Christ & us, which is

is ſpirituall and reall.

The ends of this Sacrament are twofold: 1, in reſpect of others: 2, in reſpect of our ſelves.

In reſpect of others, to teſtifie unto them that faith which wee profeſſe; that ſo they ſeeing our readineſſe herein, may have their hearts alſo ſtirred up to ſuch good duties. In reſpect of our ſelves it concernes, either what wee have received from, or what wee are to returne to God. In the firſt reſpect it ſerveth,

Firſt for remembrance; namely, of the death of Chriſt; for, *as often as we receive this, wee ſhew the Lords death*

death till he come, 1. Cor. 11. 26.

Secondly, for confirmation unto us; and that, both of our union among our ſelves; as 1. Cor. 10. 17. *for we being many are one Bread & one Body, for we all partake of one Bread*: as alſo of our Communion with Chriſt; for as the Bread and Wine are turned into the ſubſtance of our bodies; ſo we by faith are united unto Chriſt, and made fleſh of his fleſh; for *his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*; Ioh. 9. 55. and for this cauſe it is called the Communion.

In the ſecond reſpect concerning that which we are to returne unto God, it ſerves

to testify our thankfulnesse to God for his mercy in giving us his Sonne, and in him all things, and assuring us thereof by this Seale: which we cannot but doe, when we consider the torments that he endured for our sinnes, which were indeed the very nayles and speares that pierced him: and for this cause it is called the Eucharist; because in it we offer up our thanks unto God; and so also it may be called a Sacrifice: not that we doe therein offer up Christ unto God, (for Christ himselfe at once finished this offering of his Body on the Crosse) but because we offer up our thankfull hearts unto God for his mercy

mercy in Christ, so that it is a sacrifice, not of Christ, but of our thankfulnesse.

CHAP. III.

The necessity of reviving the Lords Supper.

THat we may receive this Sacrament, as we ought, we must consider 2 things. 1. the Necessity; 2. the right manner of receiving the same

As for the first, we must know that it is not a thing indifferent for us to receive or not to receive at our pleasure, but that we ought to doe it (though not every Sabbath after the custome observed in the Primitive

Church, yet without faile, as often as occasion is offered, according to the example of those in the Acts, *who continued stedfast in breaking of bread*, Act. 2.42.

The necessity of which duty will further appeare, if we consider these two things 1. the principall cause, which often keeps us from it; 2. the motives, which may draw us unto it.

First, that which makes us backward in the performance of it, is questionlesse the policy of our Arch enemy, the Divel; who strives by all meanes to draw us away, either by a carelesse neglect of our chiefest good, to feed rather on our owne foolish

foolish imaginations (as hee did them in the Gospell, who had rather *see their grounds, or prove their oxen, than tast of that supper* to which they were invited. Luke. 14. 18 19.) or else by a timorous fearefulnesse of our owne unworthinesse to approach unto so holy a banquet, as this is. And truely if wee could but see that this is his doing, wee would by all meanes strive against his temptations: for, who amongst us would not endeavour to the utmost, so farre to resist his temporall enemy, as that he should not bee able to hurt him either in body or in goods? and shall we be more carefull for the preservation

of earthly bodies, then of our heavenly ſoules, which Chriſt Ieſus hath redeemed by his precious blood? God forbid: wee muſt know that God expects more at our hands: and that our ſoules are never ſo ſafe, as when uhey ate in greateſt oppoſition, and doe that which is moſt diſpleaſing unto our chiefeſt enemy, the divell: for the more wee pleaſe him, the leſſ wee pleaſe God, and the nearer we are to him, the farther we are from God.

The motives which may draw us to the performance of this dnty, are taken from a due conſideration of theſe tow things. 1. who it is, which inviteth us unto it. 2. what

what be the consequents of receiving or not receiving.

He which inviteth us, is God himselfe, whose ordiuance it ir; and who requires it at our hands as a priucipall part of his service: and therefore as often as we omit it, we may be sure that we offend him; which he himselfe testified in threatning to *cut off that soule from his people, which should forbeare to keepe the Passeover, Numb.9.13.*& if so, then doubtlesse the neglect of this Sacrament, wherein Christ is so fully exhibited unto us, is very displeasisig unto him; which is also exprest in the parable of the great Supper, *Luke* 14.14. *None of those men, which were*

hidden, shall taste of my Supper: Why? because they came not when they were invited; and if wee refuse to come When the Lord calls, who knowes whether he will give us life untill the next invitation? let us therefore take the Lords offer, while it is to day, lest we be cut off before the morrow.

The next motive is taken from the consequents, and that 1. of not receiving. If wee receive not, we offer a twofold injury; the one to Christ, the other, to our selves.

To Christ 2. wayes. 1, in contemning his ordinance, who commanded his Disciples to receive it, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24.

24. and in them us. 2, in neglecting his love towards us; who (as a father on his death-bed) in the night that he was betrayed, bequeathed this ſeale and pledge of his love unto us., which therefore ought to be right deare unto us, and at no time neglected when it is offered.

Again, if we receive not, we injure our ſelves; and that alſo 2. wayes. 1, in reſpect of our name and profeſſion; for if we come not when others doe, we expoſe our ſelves to the cenſure of them, ſhewing that wee are at leaſt neglecters, if not contemners of GODS ordinance, *who will have all to come to it, Mat.26, 27.* yea that we have not the

life of a Christian in us; for *whosoever eateth not the flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his blood, hath no life in him. Io.6.53.2*, we injure our selves from the benifits thereof, for the remembrance of Christs death and passion, (if duely considered) cannot but be a great comfort untto us which we put from us, as often as we omit the Lords Supper: and thus much! we moy assure our selves, that the devill will be ready to take the least occasion to suggest other meditations unto us: and what a miserable thing is it for us to be exercised in our owne pleasures, or such like, when others, with whom we are bound to be present are

are reverently gathered together, to the comfort of their owne ſoules, to feed at the Lords Table? If we ſay that we are then exerciſed in other good duties, as reading the Word of God, or ſuch like; we muſt know that ſuch duties (good in themſelves) are not acceptable to God at ſuch times: and who knowes, ſeeing that herein we neglect the Lords ordinance, how farre he will give the divell leave to tempt us, and draw us away even from thoſe duties alſo to wicked imaginations?

2. The Conſequents of receiving cannot but invite us to a conſtant performance of this duty. Now theſe conſequents

ſequents reſpect either God, or our ſelves. That which reſpects God, is our duty of thankfulnes and praiſe, which herein we offer unto him for his mercy: which is very pleaſant unto him, and neceſſary to bee performed of us; becauſe *he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever towards them that feare him*: and how then can wee but with *David*, have *our hearts ready to ſing and praiſe him with the beſt member that we have?* Pſal. 108. 1.

That, which reſpects our ſelves, is the benefit which we receive thereby: which is twofold. 1. Generall. 2, more ſpeciall. The Generall benefits, which we receive by the

the Lords Supper, are chiefly two.

1, A ſupply of all our wants, which we ſhall be ſure to have if we receive aright: for he, *which eateth the fleſh of Chriſt, ſhall never hunger: and he, which drinketh his bloud, ſhall never thirſt*, as Chriſt himſelfe hath promiſed: neither need wee doubt of the truth hereof: for, *he is full of grace and truth*, Ioh. 1. 14. and *in him dwelleth all fulnes. Col.* 1. 19. and how then can we want any thing, if we poſſeſſe him that hath all things?

2, An excellent rule to our whole life: for when wee hereby conſider Gods great love unto us, wee cannot (if there be any love or feare of God

God in us) but be carefull to avoyd any thing, which may be displeasing unto him: so that hereby our bodies are made more obedient unto our soules, and our soules unto God.

The speciall benefit, which we receive by the Lords Supper, is in regard of our faith: and this again respects either our selves and others, or else our selves alone.

The first is, a testifying of our faith unto others: for hereby we both shew unto others the faith, which we professe, and also by our example stirre them up to the performance of the same duty: in this respect therefore it is necessary we should often receive. In

In the ſecond reſpect it is a confirmation and increaſe of that faith, which we have in us: wherein we are to endeavour by all meanes to continue, as S. *Paul* taught the Diſciples, *Act.* 14. 22. and beware that we fall not from our ſtedfaſtneſſe, but *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Ieſus Chriſt:* as it is 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. whereof we cannot but be carefull, if we conſider our weakneſſe; for we are ever ſubject to Apoſtaſie, and our faith is exceeding weake; as we may plainly ſee by our coldneſſe in prayer and other good duties, by our feare of death, and by our love of this world: for the ſtrength-

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ning of which, Christ hath left unto us this Sacrament, as a speciall meanes conducing thereunto: for the Covenant which our faith taketh hold of, as it is contained in the Word of God, so it is sealed unto us by this Sacrament: and therefore Christ calls the cup, *the cup of the New Testament*, because it seales unto us the Covenant of God in the New Testament, accomplished in the shedding of Christs bloud. Now if a King should in pitty and compassion send a pardon under his Seale unto a poore distressed prisoner; would we not judge that prisoner unworthy of the benefit thereof, if he should either

will,

willfully refuſe it, or careleſ. ly neglect it? queſtionleſſe wee would: yet ſuch is our caſe before God, who, as King of Kings, hath ſealed unto us by this Sacrament a full remiſſion of all our ſins: if wee therefore ſhall either wilfully contemne, or at our pleaſure receive this pledge of his love, what can we expect at Gods hands, but a juſt removeall of this his favour from us? Surely if we joyne the conſideration of our own weakneſſe, which ſo much needeth helpe, with the meditation of Gods mercy, who ſo freely giveth it, we cannot but acknowledge our owne miſery, if wee neglect it: wherefore as we feare him,

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and tender the good of our owne soules, let us bee carefull in the due performance of this so weighty a businesse. But some are wont to frame these excuses for their absence.

1. The often receiving of this Sacrament may breed a disesteeme thereof; & therefore it is safer sometimes to abstaine. To which I answere, that in matters temporall (as pleasures, and such like) the often use may breed contempt, or at least neglect, as it often doth: but in spirituall things it rather breeds a greater desire, because the more we feele and know the goodnesse of them, the more we seeke after them; yet if it so

ſo come to paſſe, that by often receiving, we beginne to undervalue the worth of it; we muſt conſider that this neglect ariſeth not from the often uſe of the thing, but from our corrupt nature; for this Exerciſe is Gods owne ordinance; alwaies attended with his bleſſing, if rightly received; appointed as a meanes to ſtire up and encreaſe our zeale and devotion; and therefore it is not likely that it ſhould hinder it. Let not this therefore keepe us from the Lords Table, but let us rather come, that it may be a meanes to encreaſe our piety.

2. Some will ſay; I am not

not prepared, and therefore dare not come: but this indeed is no excuſe; for we muſt know that we ought to be alwaies prepared, our whole life ſhould be a continuall preparation, as to all other good duties, ſo eſpecially to this; being *ever ready when the Lord ſhall call*, as our Saviour admoniſheth us, Mat. 24. 44.

3. Others will urge; I am to take a journey, or to be imployed in ſuch or ſuch a buſineſſe; and therefore I cannot come: Well: if this journey or the like, muſt of neceſſity be performed, thy excuſe is the ſafer; but if it may be any way avoyded (as oftentimes it may) aſſure thy

ſelfe

ſelfe, this is to preferre thy owne pleaſure before that which God commands: a day will certainely come, wherein we muſt give an account for the neglect of the leaſt of Gods ordinances; and then it will be ſaid of ſuch Pretences, *Who required theſe things at thy hands?*

4. Some are wont to urge; I am not in charity, by reaſon of ſome wrong which hath been offered to me, and therefore I ought not to come. This indeed is an excuſe too common: but we muſt know, that if we be not in charity, it is our own fault; for we ought to be in charity, and ſtill to preſerve it: and certainly a miſerable

ble thing it is, that we ſhould *preferre to feed on our own malice rather than to eat of the Lords Snpper*; this is to hurt our ſelves more than wee need, even to wrong our ſelves becauſe others have wronged us; we ſhould rather ſeek all meanes of reconciliation, that ſo we may remove thoſe impediments of Piety and Religion, and come the more freely to the Lords Table.

5. Some thus plead for their abſence; I am afraid to approach unto the LORDS Table by reaſon of mine infirmities, which are in me, and therefore I had rather ſometimes to refraine, leſt I come unworthily, which is a very feare-

fearefull thing. It is ſo indeed, but we muſt conſider, that our ſtaying away is no comfort unto us in this caſe, but rather a meanes to make us worſe, and to pull down Gods judgements upon us: we ſhould rather remember the goodneſſe of God, that inviteth us, promiſing to *refreſh thoſe that are heavy loaden with their ſins. Mat.* 11. 28. not putting us off for our infirmitie, or *if there be a willing mind, he accepteth us according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not.* 1. *Cor.* 8. 12. though we want that perfeection, which others have; yet, if we have a true deſire to be refreſhed by the merites

rites of Christ, and have a sincere heart before God, he will accept us according to this. Whensoever therefore the divell shall tempt thee to draw thee away by the consideration of thy owne infirmity, cheere up thy selfe with the comfort of the blind man in the Gospell, *Mark.* 10. 49. *be of good comfort, behold he calleth thee:* say unto thy selfe; Christ Iesus hath invited me, and hath promised to accept me, if my heart be sincere, humble, and willing: why then should the consideration of my infirmities keep me from it?

9. Others thus reply: I desire to receive, but I am conscious unto my selfe of some

ſome crying ſinnes which I have committed before God, for which I have not yet ſufficiently repented; and how then can I partake of this holy banquet in the preſence of God? Is it ſo? art thou poore, and yet wilt thou refuſe gold when it is offered unto thee? who will then pitty thee for thy poverty? art thou deſperately ſicke, and wilt thou not ſeeke unto the Phyſician for meanes of recovery? who will then bemoane thee for thy diſeaſe? Behold, Chriſt Ieſus is the Phyſician of thy ſoule; as well able to heale it of all it's diſeaſes, as he did the bodies of thoſe, which came unto him, of their infirmi-

ties: forſake not then this heavenly Phyſitian; but labour by a ſerious repentance to diſcharge thy conſcience of thoſe thy ſinnes, and then come ſpeedily unto him: it is the counſell of the Apoſtle, 1. *Co.* 11. who biddeth us to *examine*: *and then eat*, not goe away; firſt *examine*, *then eat of this Bread and drinke of this cup*: if thou ſay, I had rather ſtay till the next opportunity, that I may have the more time to repent; conſider that the longer thou ſtayeſt, the more ſinnes thou wilt run into, and then it will be ſo much the harder to repent as thou oughteſt: and beſides that, how doeſt thou know, whether God will give thee grace

grace and time to repent then or not? he hath promised indeed to have mercy upon a sinner, at what time soever he shall repent; but he hath not promised to give him grace to repent when he will: Seek the Lord therefore while he offereth himselfe unto thee, that thou maist finde mercy when thou seekest it.

Lastly, some in a proud manner thus excuse, (or rather justify) their absence. I doe already sufficiently believe whatsoever is proposed in the Word of God; and therefore what need have I to receive this Sacrament so often, as a seale to confirme my faith? it doth no way conferre grace unto me; and

my faith is ſo firme, that I perſwade my ſelfe I need not a ſeale to ſtrengthen it ſo much as others doe, whoſe faith is weaker; wherefore I thinke that I may ſometimes forbeare. But know, ô vaine man which thus diſputeſt with thy God, that this is Gods ordinance, a principal part of his ſervice, which therefore ought diligently to be performed, though it did no way profit us, even becauſe God had commanded it: yea, when we have done all thoſe things which are commanded us, we muſt ſay that *we are ũprofitable ſervants, we have done but that which was our duty to doe.* Luc. 17. 10. Beſides, is thy faith

ſo

ſo ſtrong that it needs no further ſtrengthening? doeſt thou not dayly perceive in thee a weakeneſſe of underſtanding in matters of Piety and Religion; a frailty in thy memory, and a continuall diſorder in thy affections? if not, know thus much, that it is a miſery to want, but a greater miſery not to be ſenſible of our wants: and this alſo knowe for a certaine truth, that when thou findeſt in thyſelfe either none, or at leaſtwiſe a ſmall deſire of hearing Gods word and receiving the Sacraments, know, I ſay, that there is ſurely ſome ſinne or other in thee not well repented of, which cloyeth thy ſoule, that it can-

not delight in those spirituall exercises. Let us therefore indeavour to come to the Lords Table as often as we are invited; and when we doe come; let us take heed that we come not for fashions sake, or to please men, or in any opinion of our owne merit in this action; for this is not a celebration, but a prophanation of the Lords ordinance; because herein we serve not God but our selves; which is a fearefull thing; for God is not as man, that he should be deceived; neither seeth he as man seeth; for man judgeth only according to the outward appearance, but God searcheth the very heart and reins; and will one

one day as certainly punish the prophaners of his ordinance, as the contemners thereof. Wherefore, as we ought in the first place to be fully perswaded of the necessity; so should we in the second by all meanes labour to come to the knowledge of the right manner of receiving; which is the next thing to be considered.

CHAP. IV.

The necessity of preparation.

HE which desires to receive at the Lords Table in a right manner, must make conscience of three duties,

which are necessarily to be performed.

1 A diligent preparation before.

2 A seasonable Meditation in the time of receiving.

3 A religious practise after the same in our lives and conversations.

In the first (as before in the matter of receiving) we must take notice of 2 things. First, The Necessity. Secondly, The right manner of Preparation.

The necessity will plainly appeare, if we consider these 2 things. First in whose, presence it is, that we are to receive. Secondly, the danger which we bring on our

our ſelves by not being prepared.

As for the firſt, we are to ſit, and feed in the preſence of the Lord himſelfe. Now if any, even the beſt of us, ſhould be invited by a King to his Princely table, he would be carefull to preſent himſelfe (if he reverence his preſence) in the beſt manner that he could, putting on then eſpecially (if he have any better then other) his beſt apparell, and diſpoſing all things in the moſt decent order, that ſo he might be the better accepted: if ſo; with what feare & reverence ſhould we then approach unto the Table of this King of Kings, when he inviteth us?

who stands there ready, attended with his Angels to behold those, which present themselves; and will soone espy out that man, who shall dare to approach before him, not having on his wedding garment: and what can such expect, but, with the man in the Gospell, *a casting out into utter darknesse? Matth.* 22. 13. Neither must we thinke to deceive the Lord with an hypocriticall out-side; for he looketh not to the outward gesture onely, but to the inward part of the soule: it is not so much a cleane hand or curious attire which maketh us accepted of God, as a pure heart and a cleansed soule, adorned with faith and repentance:

tance: we may for a time deceive mortall men, ſuch as our ſelves: but when the ſecrets of our hearts ſhall be made manifeſt, then ſhall our hypocriſie, as well as our negligence, be laid open to our deſtruction. Let us therefore humble our ſelves before God, and prepare our ſelves aright, that we may eſcape the danger which will otherwiſe fall upon us; which is the ſecond thing to be conſidered in the Neceſſity of preparation. The danger of not being prepared is particularly ſet forth unto us by cõſidering the offence, which we herein commit, and the reward thereof.

If we come unprepared, and

and so receive unworthily, our offence is no lesse than to be *guilty of the Body & Blood of Christ*: as S. *Paul* saith. 1, *Cor.* 11. 27. that is, we offer speciall disgrace and indignity unto Christ, in not receiving him with that reverence which wee ought: which offence, as it is in it selfe very haynous, so it drawes on us a fearefull punishment; for the Prophet *Ieremiah* hath pronounced him *accursed which doth the worke of the Lord deceitfully* Ierem. 48. 10. and if it be so in other things, which are of lesse moment, what can we expect for the abusing of this so weighty a matter? The Apostle setteth downe at full the

the fearefulnes hereof; when he ſaith, 1. *Cor.* 11.29. that *he which eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth & drinketh his owne damnation*: than which what can be more terrible? neither is the Scripture ſilent in ſhewing us the judgements of God upon ſuch offenders; as we may plainly ſee, both in the Old Teſtament, in the ſuddaine death of *Vzza*, for raſh touching of the Arke; and alſo in the New, in the *binding hand and foot for want of the wedding garment.* Wherefore let the danger hereof move us to a careſull preparation, before we preſume to come unto the Lords Table. But ſome may ſay: I perſwade my

my selfe, that I can by no meanes be worthy to receive this Sacrament, and how then can I receive worthily? it is true, if we truely consider our owne unworthinesse and the excellency of this Sacrament, wee cannot by any meanes become worthy thereof: but this must be our comfort, that he is truely worthy whom God in mercy accepteth as worthy; and so he will us, if we come unto him in humility and reverence. Let us therefore, according to the Apostles rule, first *try, & examine our selves, and then eat of this Supper*: which that we may the better doe, we ought in the next place to take notice of the right

right manner of preparation.

CHAP. V.

Concerning Examination in generall.

FOr our better performãce of the duty of preparation, we must be carefull to set aside a convenient time before the Communion: wherein, laying aside all other impediments, we ought seriously to be exercised in three duties. 1. A diligent examination of our fitnesse and worthinesse to receive. 2. A comfortable premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive. 3. earnest prayer

prayer unto God for a blessing upon our endeavours; that so we may be accepted to receive those benefits.

In our examination we are to consider; 1 To whom this duty belongs: 2 how it is to be performed.

The first we learne from S. *Paul.* 1, *Cor.* 11. who biddeth *every man to try and examine himselfe:* so that we our selves are to examine our selves. Indeed the Ministers of the word of God, and all such, to whom God hath cõmitted the charge and care of others, ought carefully to try & examine those, which belong unto them; that so they may be more fit: and inferiours ought also willingly to submit themselves unto

unto their triall; yea, if it be not offered, to ſeek their help when they doubt of any thing; that ſo by their directions they may the more cheerefully goe on. Theſe are duties, which God requires at the hands of all, the neglect whereof will one day fall heavy upon thoſe, which ſhall faile in the due performance thereof. Yet this is not ſufficient; for we are, for the moſt part, full of hypocriſy, ready to hide our ſins from others: yea we are ſo witty in iniquity, that we can behave our ſelves ſo ſmoothly, in reſpect of the outward ſhew, that others ſhall finde no fault in us at all; though notwithſtanding our conſciences doe all the while

while accuſe us of ſome ſins lurking within us: wherefore we are commanded alſo to try and examine every man himſelfe in particular.

This examination muſt be twofold. Firſt, Generall. Secondly, Particular. In the firſt wee muſt examine our ſelves in theſe two things. 1, Whether we be in the number of the faithfull or not: which is very needfull to be conſidered, otherwiſe wee partake in vaine: for as our bodies can receive no nouriſhing and ſtrengthning from the food which we daily receive, unleſſe they have ſome life in them before: ſo neither can our ſoules, if they be voyde of the life of grace, receive

receive any comfort by this ſpiritnall food in the Lords Supper; which doth continue and encreaſe life, where it findes it: but works none, where there is none before. Let us therefore in the firſt place diligently try whether Chriſt be in us or not; of which we ſhall the more fully aſſure our ſelves, if we can finde this perſwaſion in us, that we (as our forefathers were) *are ſtrangers and pilgrimes here, Heb.* 11.13. *looking for a city* (as *Abraham* did) *which had foundations, whoſe builder & maker is God*; & that we are *made free from the bondage of ſinne by the Son of God, Chriſt Ieſus. Ioh.* 8.36. and ſo with *David*, *put our whole*

whole trust and rely only on his mercy. Psal. 52. 9. 2, We are to make tryall of our readinesse, whether we be willing and have a desire to partake of the Lords Supper or no. A willing mind God required of those, which *offered any thing for the building of the Tabernacle:* as it is *Exod.* 25. 2. and of those, *which offered any burnt offerings, Levit.* 19. 5. If so in these, which were but shadowes of things to come; much more doth he expect it at our hands in the performance of this duty, which is the substance it selfe. Neither yet let us here deceive our selves, thinking that a bare consent and willing mind is sufficient; it is an

an hungry desire and appetite, as well as a willingnesse, to receive meat offered; yea that especially, which testifieth a good disposition in the stomacke: and God requireth in all his service, (therefore in this also) that *we serve him with all our heart and with all our soule. Deut.* 10 12. and *blessed are they, which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall be filled. Mat.* 5. 6. For want of this desire it is, that many, when they come to the Lords Table are never the better; because God, as he inviteth, so he feedeth none but those that *hunger and thirst. Isai.* 55. 1. Let us therefore try & examine our selves whether

we

we can say with *David, Psal.* 42. 1. *Like as the Hart desireth the water brookes; so longeth my soule after thee, ô God: my soule is a thirst for God, yea even for the living God: when shall I come to appeare before the presence of God?* if we can find this desire in us, then happy are we: if not, let us humble our selves before God, and beseech him to work and stirre up in us the good motions of his spirit, that so we may attaine to some measure of this thirst; and from that goe on farther to a particular examination of our fitnesse to receive.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Examination of our.

IN our particular Examination, (because we are dull and ignorant in matters that concerne our Salvation, and also have, and doe often offend both God and our neighbours; all which are hinderances to the dûe performance of this duty, we must examine our selves in those particulars, which concerne both our information in matters which we should understand; and our reconciliation with those, whom we have offended.

That

That which concernes our information, is a good and wholesome knowledge of those things, which God hath revealed unto us; which is so necessary, that it is the very ground of all our service of God: for how can we doe the will of God aright, if we know it not? *Surely that the soule be without knowledge, it is not good* saith *Solomon, Prov.* 19. 2. and therefore *God will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth.* 1. *Tim.* 2. 6. without which we can reape no comfort unto our selves in any thing that we doe; but are as dead men: for *this* (and this onely) *is life eternall, that we know God and Iesus Christ whom he hath sent,*

Ioh.

Jo. 17. 3. So that without it there is no life: and hence it is that the Lord himselfe complaines, *Hos.* 4. 6. *My people are perished for lack of knowledge*: & hence it comes to passe, that many receive this Sacrament without any benefit unto themselves, because they are not able to discerne of it aright. We should therefore all our life long carefully exercise our selves in the word of God, that so, when we shall come to examine our selves concerning our knowledge, we may the more easily, and with the greater comfort, try our fitnesse in this respect; whether we have attained to a competent measure of knowledge

in the grounds of Religion or not. Which that we may the better doe, we are to make tryall of a twofold Knowledge, which we ought to have: the one concerning God, the other concerning man.

Concerning God, we are to know, that there is but one, only wise and true God, subsisting in three Persons; the Father begetting the Son; the Son begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both: which is a mystery farre exceeding our understanding; yet so farre are we to know and believe it, as God hath revealed it in his word: and therefore first are we to examine our selves con-

concerning this knowledge.

Concerning man we are to know, that he was first created in uprightnesse *according to the Image of God. Gen.*1.17. bnt afterwards fell through disobedience, and was againe recovered by the meritorious death of Christ Iesus. This we are to examine according to the 2 parts of the Word of God, the law and the Gospell.

In the first we shall plainly see what we are in our selves, even wretched and miserable sinners, corrupt children of disobedient parents, and that we have justly deserved death as a due reward for our manifold sinnes both originall and actuall, being

carnall, sold under sinne, by nature the children of wrath Ephes. 2. 3.

In the second we shall understand that wee are in Christ, and what that covenant is, which God hath made unto man in him for the pardoning of their sinnes which returne unto him by repentance, and apply the same unto themselves by faith. So that here we are to know two things: 1. the meanes of our redemption & reconciliation, the Death of Christ: *whom God in love sent into the world, to redeeme them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons. Gal. 4. 5. & so hath delivered us from the power of dark-*

darknesse. Colos. 1. 13.

2. The means, whereby we may apply this ũto our selves: namely faith: which is a gift of God, begotten and increased by hearing the word, and receiving the Sacrament. Let us therefore seriously examine our selves, whether we have learned out of the Word of God our first innocency, which we had by creation: our misery, which we fell into by transgression: and the happinesse, which we have obtained again by our sweet and blessed redemption: for in those things ought every one to be instructed, which approacheth unto the Lords Table.

Besides this Knowledge

of God and man, we ar further to have a particular knowledge of the sacrameut it selfe: where we are to try, whether wee doe rightly discerne the Elements from the Lords Body, and the true use of them: wherein wee must consider, that the Bread and wine, (in themselves ordinary) being ordained of Christ, are now become holy, and whereas Christ blessed this Sacramente at the first institution, wee are to knowe that it is a blessed Sacrament: because, whatsoever hee blesseth, is blessed, & that it will bee a meanes of great blessing unto us, if rightly received; and whereas Christ gaue the same after Supper,

Supper, wee must further know, that it was not ordained to satisfie our bodily hunger: for, *if any man* thus *hunger*, Saint Paul tells him that he must *eat at home*, 1. *Corinth.* 11.34. but it was given for the refreshing of our wearied Soules by the commemoration of Christs death for us, and of our communion with him: but of this particular Knowledge of the Sacrament, more in the beginning of the first chapter. In this, as in the former, wee must diligently trie and examine ourselves, for, except we know all these things, we are not to partake at the Lords Table: because without it, whatsoever wee doe,

is but blinde devotion.

CHAP. VII.

The Examination of our repentance.

THus of our information in matters, which we ought to know. As for our reconciliation, we are to examine our ſelves in thoſe things which concerne either God or our Neighbours; becauſe we have and doe often offend both.

Thoſe which concerne God are principally two. 1. Repentance whereby we teſtifie our hearty ſorrow for offending him, with a deſire of amendment. 2. Faith; where.

whereby we take hold on his mercy, for the pardon and forgiveneſſe of them.

Firſt we are to try whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of Repentance. And indeed, if we truly look into our ſelves, and conſider that wee muſt one day give an account for every idle word, we ſhall finde matter enough for Repentance, if our hearts be not hardned in ſinne. Now, that it is neceſſary to examine our ſelves herein, appeares from this, becauſe without it we have no ground at all for any comfort in Chriſt Ieſus; for he, which is ſtuft with his ſinnes, is no more fit to receive Chriſt, than a glutted

ſtomake it's meat: and a gaine, *unto them that are defiled, there is nothing pure.* Tit. 1 15. that is, if through unbelieſe, they remaine in their pollutions; but *unto the pure all things are pure*; and *if wee cleanſe our hands & purify our hearts and ſo draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto us.* Iam. 4. 8. *as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them.* Gal. 6. 16. Let us then *ſearch and try our waies and turne unto the Lord.* Lament. 3. 40. and put on Davids reſolution before wee come to the Lords Table; *I will waſh my hands in innocency, O Lord, & ſo will I go to thy Altar. Pſal. 26. 6.* In this examination of our Repentance

tance wee must have respect, both unto the time past and to come.

In respect of the time past we are to performe three duties.

1. Carefully search our hearts to finde out our owne corruptions; that knowing them, wee may the better avoid them, which is most necessary to bee done, and that in the first place; because it is impossible that hee should seeke to goe into the right way, which doth not first see his errour: and thus much we must know, that hee that will not set his sinnes before him here to his conversion, shall have them set before him hereafter to his confusi-

on,

on, if we will needs cover and hide ſinnes, let us in love and charity cover the ſinnes of others; for *Love covereth a multitude of ſinne.* 1. *Pet.* 4. 8. that is, layeth them not open before men to their diſgrace, who have committed them; as many doe, who delight to heare other mens faults ript up to the quicke, but cannot endure to heare of their owne: we ſhould not ſo much exclaime againſt other mens ſinnes, but rather be humbled for our own, and lay them fully open before our ſelves; that ſo we may come to a more ſerious repentance for them. Which I thinke, we cannot but doe (except we have more than

ſtony

ſtony hearts) when we con-ſider the torments which Chriſt ſuffered for our ſinnes; and ſee our own miſery, what we are in our ſelves: for this muſt needs drive us unto God, as a deſperate diſeaſe unto the Phyſitian; and make us utterly to accuſe our ſelves and ſay, *Pſal.* 51. 3. *I acknowledge my fault, and my ſinne is ever before me.*

Now the chiefeſt meanes, which we can uſe to come to the knowledge of our ſinnes, are theſe two. 1, A continu-all meditation in the Word of God, wherein (as in a glaſſe) we ſhall plainly ſee all our deformities. 2, A ſeaſo-nable conference and con-verſation with ſuch as are themſelves

thē ſelves touched with their ſinnes, both which are excellent meanes: and therefore wee ought ſincerely to love the Word of God, becauſe it doth diſcover our ſinnes unto us; and diligently read, and exerciſe our ſelves in it, that ſo wee may come to a full knowledge of it; and alſo heartily affect and love thoſe whom wee ſee to be thus affected. When we have thus conſidered, that we ought, and how wee may diſcover our ſinnes; let us examine our ſelves whether wee have thus done in our life paſt or no, giving thanks to GOD that he hath at any time diſcovered ſuch or ſuch ſinnes untous: if we finde that wee

have

have not thus done (as God knowes, we are all too ſlack herein) let us ſeaſonably repent us of this neglect; and bee ſorry that wee have no ſooner repented; deſiring God that hee will be pleaſed ever more and more to diſcover our ſinnes unto us, that ſo we may the better forſake them and ſerve him, as wee ought. Having thus unfolded our ſins before our eyes, let us in the ſecond place examine, how in ſorrow we have humbled our ſelves to God for them; for this is that, even our ſorrow, which muſt move God to compaſſion; and we know that *God is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will ſave ſuch*

such as be of an humble spirit. Psal. 34. 18. and therefore *David* being pressed downe with the burden of his sinnes, comforted himselfe in this saying: *The Sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit, a broken & a contrite heart, O God shalt thou not despise. Ps.* 51. 17. Whereas on the contrary, if we have no true sorrow, if our soules be not wounded within us for our sinnes, we cannot expect that either we or our prayers should be accepted of God; or, that we shall with the Sacrament receive any comfort to our soules, if we come not to it with sorrow for our former transgressions.

Now there is a twofold sorrow:

ſorrow: 1, Servile; when we are ſorry for our ſinnes (as ſome ſervants are, when they have offended their Maſters) not becauſe we have ſinned againſt ſuch a Maſter, but becauſe we have thereby made our ſelves ſubject to the puniſhment due unto our offence: this is not that ſorrow, which God expecteth of us: for it rather driveth us to deſpaire, than to any pious meditations. 2, Filiall: when (like naturall children) we grieve for our ſinnes, not ſo much in reſpect of the puniſhment due unto us, as that wee have ſinned againſt ſo mercifull and loving a Father. This is that true ſorrow, with which we ought

to

to be affected: which we may obtaine two wayes. First, by our selves. Secondly, by the helpe of others also.

By our selves, and so by the consideration especially of two things: First, who it is that we have offended: even God himselfe, who in tender mercy towards us, gave his only begotten Sonne to dye for our sins. The consideration of which cannot but worke in us a true sorrow, that we should offend so mercifull a God: for what sonne is there (if he have in him the affection of a sonne) but would grieve that hee should offend a Father, which hath been ever loving and

and kind unto him?

2. The grievousnesse of our sinnes which we have committed; which will plainly appeare, if we consider them either in respect of our selves, how deadly they wound the conscience; or with reference to others, how infectious they have bin to them, whom we have often drawne into the same faults, which we our selves have committed; and so have made them guilty of our sins, and our selves of theirs.

The next meanes to attaine this sorrow, is the help of other men, who are themselves touched with a feeling in this kinde; with whom we ought to accompany our selves,

ſelves, and patiently to accept of their admonitions, ſtill accounting them our trueſt friends, which moſt faithfully and roundly put us in mind of our faults. The hypocrite may eſteeme ſuch as deſire thus to expreſſe their love, buſie bodies, or the like; but *Davids* wiſh was, that *the righteous might ſmite him friendly and reprove him*. *Pſal.* 141. 5. and whoſoever is a ſound hearted Chriſtian will ever ſtrive to make the beſt uſe of ſuch, as he can. Let us therefore examine our ſelves, whether we have made good uſe of thoſe meanes or not: if we have not, wee ought to humble our ſelves before God for this neglect alſo; earneſtly

earneſtly beſeeching him, that he will worke in us true ſorrow for our ſinnes paſt, with a deſire of amendment. Whereunto, that we may the better move him, we are in the next place to lay open & confeſſe our ſinnes unto God; which is the third thing required in our Repentance. Confeſſion is ſo neceſſary, that without it we can expect no pardon at Gods hands, but rather ſome judgement or other; and therefore Solomon ſaith. *He, that covereth his ſinnes, ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth & forſaketh them ſhall have mercy:* and Saint Iohn perſwadeth us hereunto by the mercies of God, ſaying: *If we confeſſe our ſinnes,*

sinnes, he is faithfull and just to forgive us our sinnes, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesse. John 1. 1. 9.

Now in our confession we are to observe especially three things. First what we are to confesse. Secondly to whom. Thirdly how.

As for the first, there is a twofold confession. 1. *Laudis*, or of Thankfulnesse; of which David speaks *Psal.* 89. 1. *With my mouth wil I ever be shewing thy truth; yea every day will I give thanks to thee and praise thy name. Psal.* 145. 2. Which we are also daily to practise according to his example: but this is not that confession which is so properly meant here in the matter of Repentance

tance. There is therefore another, called *Confessio fraudis*, a confession of sinne; and this we are to make, if we will truely repent: which ought to be, not of some sinnes only, but of all as farre as we can call them to minde; and especially of those beloved and bosome sinnes to which we are most addicted: which that we may the better doe, we ought daily to renew the memory of thē in our selves; that so we may be the better able faithfully to confesse the same, as often as occasion requires.

2. We are to confesse our sinnes, not unto men or Angels, but unto God, who is the supreame Iudge of all.

There

There is indeed a time wherein we may make confeſſion, before men; either in publike, before a whole congregation by way of pennance, being by the Church thereunto commanded; or elſe in private; and that, either, for ſatisfaction, to our Neighbour, whom we have wronged; or for conſolation, to the Miniſter, when our conſciences are troubled. But that confeſſion, which is a part of our Repentance for our ſinnes paſt againſt God, and wherein we deſire full pardon for the ſame, we are to make to God alone: for he it is, who is offended, and he alone, that can forgive our ſinnes.

3. Our confeſſion muſt not

not be of the heart onely, but of the mouth alſo; for God who made both, expecteth to bee honoured by both; and as both have been uncleane before him; ſo they ought both alſo to acknowledge the ſame, that he may cleanſe and purifie both them, and with them the whole man.

Againe our confeſſion muſt proceed from a two-fold ground. 1. Hatred of ſinne, becauſe by it wee diſhonour God. 2. Hope of mercy. which is that wee ayme at in our confeſſion; and it muſt further be qualified with ſincerity, with ſhame and ſorrow that wee have offended ſo gracious a God, leaſt God reject us as hypocriticall. Let

us therfore henceforth leave off censuring the faults of other men, and beginne to aggravate our owne; and especially before we presume to come to the Supper of the Lord: Let us take some time unto our selves, wherein we may be most private; and shut our selves up in our Closets, and there humbly on our knees lay open before God those sinnes, which we have committed in our life past: & that fully and faithfully; neither diminishing the number of them, nor mincing the haynousnesse of them, for God will not bee mocked. These are things, which wee are to performe in respect of the time past: as for the time

to

to come, we must know, that he which will truely repent, must not onely turne from Evill, but also turne unto good; and therefore, having confessed our sins past with sorrow for them, we must (if we expect pardon) constantly purpose for ever after, by Gods grace, to amend and reforme our lives; resolving (as much as in us lieth) to avoid all occasions, which may draw us into the like sinnes againe, and to make better use of those meanes which God hath affoorded us, than wee have done heretofore; and that by so much the more, by how much wee have offended so gracious a Father. But of this resoluti-

on of amendment, more in the 12. Chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

The Examination of our Faith.

THe Examination of our Faith, is that whereunto S. *Paul* exhorteth the *Corinthians*, saying, *examine your selves, whether you bee in the Faith or not*, 2. *Cor.* 13. 5. The necessity whereof appeareth even from this, that *without Faith we cannot please God in any thing we doe*, *Heb.* 11. 26. much lesse in this weighty businesse: yea Faith is so necessary, that without it wee doe receive nothing at all, when

when we doe receive; for although with our bodily hands we receive the Bread and Wine; yet if we have not Faith, wee want a hand to receive the Body and Bloud of Christ, & the comfort which thence ariseth unto our soules: for how can wee be perswaded in our consciences, that our receiving is acceptable unto God, and that the merits of Christ Iesus belong unto us without Faith? It is impossible that wee should receive any mote cōfort than what we believe; & therefore our Saviour Christ saith, *He that believeth on me, shall never thirst*, *Joh.* 6. 35. therein implying, that hee which doth not believe in

him, ſhall ever thirſt: yea, which is fearefull, *hee which beleeveth not, ſhall be damned, Mar.16.16.*

Now that Faith which is here required of us, muſt not bee onely a generall faith, whereby we believe that the Word of God is true, & that God is a juſt Iudge; (for this the Divells themſelves believe and tremble at it; and well they may, conſidering what is due to them, eternall condemnation) but we muſt goe on further to a more ſpeciall kinde of Faith, & (which they cannot doe) apply the merits of Chriſt, and the promiſes of God made therein, unto our Soules and Conſciences; ſaying with *Iob.*

chap.

chap,19. *verſ.* 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth:* I know, by the knowledge of Faith, or I believe ; and not onely the Redeemer of Man, but My Redeemer liveth.

Of which that wee may the more fully perſwade our ſelves, we muſt believe; firſt, concerning our ſelves, that we are not able of our ſelves to doe any thing that is acceptable and pleaſing in the ſight of God ; *for we have nothing but what we have received of God*, as S. *Paul* teſtifieth, whether good gift, or ability of doing good.

2. Concerning the meanes of our Salvation, wee muſt believe, that the merits of Chriſts Death and Paſſion,

are alone ſufficient for our Redemption, without any merits at all, or ſatisfaction of ours.

3, Concerning God, wee ought to believe, that if wee truely repent us of our life paſt, conſtantly purpoſing to lead a new life hereafter, and ſincerely uſe thoſe good means, which he ſhall affoord us, he will then be mercifull unto us in accepting our indeavours, through the merits of Chriſt Ieſus.

4, Concerning the Sacrament, wee ought to believe; that it is a meanes, ordained of God, to exhibite unto us Chriſt Jeſus with his merits, and a ſeale to confirme our Faith. If, upon conſideration

on of these particulars, wee can be thus perswaded of our owne insufficiency and unworthinesse, and that yet notwithstanding upon our sincere humiliation and obedience, God will bee mercifull unto us; if wee cannot onely say in generall that God is a mercifull Father, and that Christ died for the redemption of Man; but every one of us in particular thus apply unto himselfe: I believe that God is my mercifull Father, and Christ Iesus died to redeeme mee as well as any other: all which I shall have plainly confirmed unto mee in the receiving of this Sacrament, wherein, (I trust) God wil in mercy accept me

for Christs merits, though of my selfe I be unworthy: if (I say) we can finde that we are not hypocritically, but sincerely, not verbally, but heartely, thus perswaded; then may wee, having thus made peace with God by our Faith and Repentance, boldly approach unto the Lords Table.

CHAP. IX.

The Examination of our Charity.

HAving examined our selves in those former duties towards God, wee are to goe on to another duty, which concerneth our neighbour:

bour; namely, charity: which is a free forgiving of those that have offended us, with a testification of the same, whē occasion is offered: and a reconciliation of our selves to those, whom wee also our selves have wronged.

That we may bee the better perswaded unto a due performance of this duty, we are to observe two things.

1, The motives thereunto.

2, The manner how it ought to be done.

The motives, which invite us to the neeessity of it, are drawn from the consideration of these foure things.

1, What we our selves have done unto others.

2, What

2, What harme we doe unto our ſelves by not being in charity.

3, What they are, with whom we are offended.

4, Whence ſuch wrongs, as we receive, doe primarily come.

As for the firſt, wee are conſcious unto our ſelves of a twofold offence, which we have committed.

1, Againſt other men; whom perhaps wee have at ſome time or other more wronged, then they us, or at leaſt our conſciences can tell us, that wee have beene prone and ready thereunto, had we not beene prevented: and how can he, which hath beene forward to wrong

others,

others, make the most of every wrong offered by others unto himselfe? We must here take notice of the advise of *Salomon* in another case. *Seek not*, saith hee, *to have thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes thy heart knoweth, that thou thy selfe hast also cursed others. Eccles. 7. 22.* So also be not hasty to aggravate the wrong which others have done unto thee; for thy heart can tell thee, that thou thy selfe hast also wronged others.

2. If this consideration prevaile not with us; let us consider in the next place, that wee have daily offended God farre more than any man can offend us: and can any

any of us expect any mercy from God in the forgiveneſſe of our debts, if we ſhew none to others in paſſing by ſmall matters of offence? Small, I ſay, becauſe the greateſt are ſmall in reſpect of the offences which we have committed againſt God. Our Saviour Chriſt told his Diſciples plainely (and in them us) *Mar.* 11.25. *If ye doe not forgive others their treſpaſſes, nether will your heavenly Father forgive you your treſpaſſes:* which was verified in the Parable of the cruell ſervant; who (becauſe he had no compaſſion on his fellow-ſervant, as his Lord had pitty on him) was *delivered to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that*

was

was due; with this application annexed, *so likewise shall my heavenly Father doe also unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses*, *Mat.* 18. 34. 35. The consideratiō whereof, I think, is able to move any good-hearted Christian to love his brethren, though they have offended him.

The second motive unto this duety is taken from the consideration of the harme, that otherwise we bring upon our owne Soules; which indeed is greater, than either wee can doe unto others, or they unto us.

This harme is twofold; 1 Generall; namely, a staine to all the good, which wee have

have: for *though wee speake with the tongue of Men and Angels:* though wee have all other good gifts, as of *Prophecying, understanding of mysteries, &c. yet, if wee have not Charity, wee are nothing,* 1. *Cor.*13.1.2. Let us not therefore boast of our learning and other good parts, as long as we are without Charity; for all is nothing; *no more than a sounding brasse or a tinkling Cymball.*

2. Particular: and so it is an hinderance, 1, To our Prayers; 2, to the right receiving of the Sacrament. The want of Charity is an hinderance to our Prayers in a twofold respect.

1, Because, without Charity

rity, we cannot expect to receive that which wee pray for; for if we pray to God to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespas against us, how shall we hope that God will forgive us, if we forgive not others, which is the condition of our Prayers? To pray for the one, and not to performe the other, is to mock God in our Prayers; or rather, miserably to deceive ourselves: for as many have not because they ask not: so *many ask & receive not, because they ask amisse: Iam.* 4. 3. and such are they which aske without charity; and who knowes how soone they may stand in need of Gods mercy?

2. It

2, It hinders our Prayers in this respect; because without Charity, we cannot joyne those, with whom we are at variance, with our selves in our Prayers: which is against the rule of our Saviour Christ, who biddeth us to pray; *Our Father*, and *give us our Bread*; and so joyne others with our selves iu every Petition: now how can we heartely pray thus for them, whom we love not? our owne consciences can sufficiently tell us, that wee cannot; yea, and that wee often have been faulty herein. Wherefore, if we desire that our Prayers should hence forth be effectuall, let us follow the counsell, which S.

Peter

Peter giveth to the Husband and Wife, 1.*Pet*.3. 7. which is, *to live together according to knowledge, bearing one with another, that our prayers be not hindred*: which if we doe, our Prayers shall be much furthered, as Christ himselfe saith: *If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching the thing that they shall aske, it shall bee done for them of my Father which is in Heaven: Mat*.18. 19.

The want of Charity is an hinderance to our due receiving of the Sacrament: because the Sacrament is a Seale of our union and communion, as with Christ, so amongst our selves; as Saint *Paul* saith: 1.*Cor*:10.16.17.

The

The cup of blessing which wee blesse, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? for we, being many, are one Bread & one Body; because we partake of one Bread: So that, unlesse wee be joyned together in love, wee cannot be capable of those benefits, which otherwise would arise unto our Soules.

Againe, love is the very badge whereby wee are knowne to be Christs Disciples, *Ioh.* 13 35. *by this shall al men know that yee are my disciples, if yee love one another.* It is a part of that wedding-garment, wherewith every one ought to bee cloathed, that

that comes to the Lords Table. Wherefore, if we desire to be accepted when we doe come, and there to receive the benefits of Christs Death and Passion, let us put on the bowels of mercy and compassion.

A third Motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the parties, with whom we are offended: they are Men, yea Christians as well as our selves; such for whom Christ died as well as for us. Shall wee then thinke it hard to suffer some small wrong at their hands, for whom Christ thought it not too much to die? can we perswade our selves, that there is the love of God in us, if

we

wee hate them whom he so loved? *every one, which loveth him that begate, loveth him also that is begotten of him* 1. *Ioh.*5.1. and whosoever loveth him that did redeeme, loveth him also that is redeemed by him.

The fourth Motive unto this duty of Charity is taken from a serious consideration of the first originall, whence these wrongs proceed, which we receive.

And here we may take notice both of the Author, and also of the Disposer thereof. The first Author is not so much the party from whom we receive the wrong; as the grand-enemy of both us and them, the Divell, who well know-

knoweth, that *a houſe divided againſt it ſelfe cannot ſtand*: and therefore ſtriveth by all meanes to ſet us at variance among our ſelves, though ſometimes upon ſmall occaſions; that ſo thereby hindering us from the performãce of good duties (as the receiving of the Sacrament, and ſuch like) which are the meanes of our Salvation, hee may the more eaſily tempt us to worſe imployments, while others are bettet exerciſed; and ſo make his ſide the ſtronger againſt us: and who knowes what power it may pleaſe God to give him againſt us at ſuch times? Wherefore, as wee love our own ſafety, let us ſeeke to croſſe

crosse him, who thus opposeth us by his temptations: & if we will needs be at strife, let it be with him, who will never bee at quiet with us, untill he have gotten the upper hand of us: which wee may the more easily perswade our selves uuto; if we have respect not so much to other mens wrongfull actions, as to his wicked suggestions, the cause of all; and assure our selves, that, in putting up a wrong, wee right our selves, and crosse him; which should be our chiefest ayme.

Againe, as the Divell is the Authour of our wrongs: so God, who is the Disposer of all things', hath a hand in it:

it: who permitteth the Divell thus farre to provoke us: perhaps for the tryall of our constancy and patience, or for some other ends best known unto himselfe: and, if we could but see, that the finger of God is in our Crosses, wee would patiently answere with *David*, Psalm. 39. 10. *I will become dumb, and open not my mouth, because it is thy doing; and so commit our cause to him, that hee might make our righteousnesse cleere*, Psal. 37. 6,

These are the chiefest Motives to perswade us to this duty of Love and Charity; to all which we may adde another, takē from the exceeding love of God to us, *who*

so loved us, without any love received first from us, *that he sent his sonne to be a propitiation for our sinnes*, 1. *Iohn*. 4. 10. Whence the Apostle gathereth this powerfull consequence: *If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, *verse* 11. Which that wee may the better doe, let us in the next place see the manner how it ought to bee performed.

Here wee are to have respect both to the time past, and also to come.

As for the time past, either we have wronged others, or they us. If wee have wronged others, wee ought to performe two things. 1, Vndoe that which we have done, by making

making restitution as farre as in us lies: according to the example of *Zacheus*, *Luk*, 19. 8. who was willing to *restore fourefold whatsoever hee had taken from any mã by false accusation:* such ought wee to be, ready to make good, what soever wee have taken from any man, and to give satisfaction for any wrong that wee have done. Neither is it sufficient to bee willing thus to make satisfaction, when wee are moved thereunto: but we must also in the second place seek peace with those, whom wee have wronged, though we be not ask't: which is the Counsell of Christ himselfe. *Mat.* 5. 23. 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the Altar, & there*

remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leave thy gift before the Altar, and goe thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother: hee ſaith not, ſtay till he come to thee; or be reconciled when he commeth: but goe thou to him. And ſo *David* alſo adviſeth us, *Pſalm*, 34.14. *Seek peace and enſue it*: ſtay not till it be offered to, or required of thee; but ſeek it. But perhaps thoſe (whom wee have offended) are farre off, and we cannot come neare them; or neere, and will not bee reconciled to us, what ſhall we doe in this caſe? Here wee ought to uſe all meanes that we can, for the procuring of peace and quietneſſe: but if either

either occaſion or acceptance be denyed us, we muſt not doubt but that God will bee pleaſed to accept of our deſire.

Now, if others have wronged us, wee muſt (though perhaps it may ſeeme ſomewhat hard) freely forgive them; loving even them that hate us, whereunto our Saviour Chriſt admoniſheth us in every Goſpell; ſaying, *If thy brother treſpaſſe againſt thee ſevẽ times a day, thou ſhalt forgive him, Luk.* 17.4. And again, *I ſay unto you, love your enimies; bleſſe them that curſe you, Mat.* 5.44. But ſome one may ſay, ſuch an one hath wronged me ſo much, that fleſh and bloud cannot take.

it. It is true, if thou consult with flesh and bloud, it will seeme hard to beare the least wrong: but flesh is not a friend, whom wee may safely consult; but rather a bosome enemy, whom wee ought to resist: if wee aske counsell of Christ (whose counsell wee ought and may most safely follow) hee will bid us goe and be reconciled: and S. *Paul* bids us to *feed our enimies, and to overcome evill with good*, *Rom.* 11.21. and *Solomon* can tell us, that *it is the glory of a man to passe over a transgression*, *Prov.* 19.11. As for revenge, it is not for us to meddle with it; because the Lord himselfe saith, *Deut.* 32.35. *To mee belongeth vengeance*

geance and recompence: and S. *Iames* will assure us, that *to have bitter envyings and strife in the heart, is wisdome which descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensuall, divelish: but that wisdome, which is from above, is easie to bee intreated, and full of mercy, Iames.* 3. 17. Wherefore let us grieve at such wrathfull motions, assuring our selves that it is a point of heavenly wisdome to forbeare; and certainly, if wee can but once finde that God hath wrought in us a readinesse to forgive those, which have wronged us, and to pray for their conversion, we may esteem it an evident signe of Sanctification.

As for the time to come,

that we may the better preſerve the bond of Charity, we muſt reſolve carefully to obſerve theſe two ſorts of rules. 1. How we may keep peace with others. 2, How others may doe the like with us.

As for the firſt, becauſe others may outwardly wrong us either in word or deed, that wee may in both avoid diſcontent and ſtrife thereupon, wee muſt propoſe unto our ſelves a twofold rule.

1, Concerning their words; which is the rule in *Solouon, Prov.7.21.* namely, *That we take no heed unto al words that are ſpoken :* for this is that, which often ſtirreth up ſtrife amongſt us, which otherwiſe might

might easily, and without any prejudice bee avoided, if men were not too inquisitive and ready to take notice of every thing that is spoken: and therefore we should here not entertaine but sleight, yea reject such men, who, under pretence of love unto us, will whisper in our eares, and maliciously informe us against such or such an one; whom *Solomon* calleth *pick-thanks, whisperers, tale-bearers, such as will separate chief friends. Prov.* 16. 28. for occasion of separation may bee given (if so taken) betweene friends; as we often see that he, which is singularly affected to another, may hastily speake some reproachfull

words of him; which perhaps he will presently be sorry for, and not speak the like againe: yet this shall bee enough for the breach of charity, if it bee in the audience of a whisperer: who (to speake the truth) is a meere incendiary, that will ever be adding fuell to the fire of contention. Whence Saint *Iames* calls the tongue *a fire, a world of iniquity, that setteth on fire the whole course of Nature, Iam.3.6.* And *Solomon* saith, that *without wood the fire is quenched; and without a tale-bearer, strife ceaseth, Pro. 26.20.*

The second rule, whereby we may keepe peace with others, is concerning other mens

mens actions: which is, that wee so take them (though sometimes wrongfull) that wee bee not easily provoked thereby; for an hasty and furious discontent upon some small occasion, doth often breake out to the breach of charity; whereas a seasonable deliberation would mitigate the matter, and so cover all in silence. And therefore Saint *Paul* tells us, that *Charity suffereth long, and is not easily provoked.* 1. *Cor.* 13. 4. 5. If we can but make true use of these two rules, wee may easily, for our parts, live at peace with others. Secōdly, we must endeavour that others also by our carriage may doe the like with us: to which

which purpose we must take away, first a common fault amongst us, which is a maine cause of strife and enmity: 2. the occasion thereof.

The fault it selfe is railing, scandalous and reproachfull speaking: which is so frequent, that few or none (if we looke narrowly into our words) but are conscious unto themselves hereof; but so hainous in it selfe, that Saint *Paul* ranketh it with robbery and extortion, 1. *Cor.* 6. 10. saying that *neither theeues nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdome of God*; & so pernitious also unto the sweet society of mē; that it is that breath, which ottē blows the coales of contention so farre,

farre, that they cannot bee quenched againe without blood: and daily experience teacheth us, that there is no ſuch common cauſe of ſtrife and debate, as ſcandalous termes which are ſo often heard amongſt us: ſo that, if we can but avoid theſe, wee ſhall take away the very ground upon which our wrongfull actions are builded; and therefore S. *Iames*, *beſeeching us* by the name of *brethren*, exhorteth us *not to ſpeak evill one of another*, Iam. 4.11, and S. *Peters* advice is, that *we lay aſide all evill ſpeakings, and, as new horne Babes deſire the ſincere Milke of the Word*, 1. *Pet.* 2.1.

Now, that our ſpeech of others

others may bee ſuch as it ought to be, let us follow the adviſe of *Solomon*; whoſe counſell is, that *it be friendly:* Prov. 18. 24. *A man that hath friends, ought to ſhew him ſelfe friendly:* not uttering any thing that may tend to their diſgrace; leaſt, by ſuch diſcourteſies, hee looſe their good liking, but rather endeavour by faire, and courteous ſpeeches, to knit their hearts faſter unto him.

Neither yet can we eaſily avoid this fault, unleſſe in the ſecond place wee take away the occaſion of it; which is a tickling deſire, that moſt men are affected with, to heare the faults of other men (though perhaps leſſe than their own) laid

laid open and ſpoken againſt: which quickly begetteth a ſuſpition of their worth, and hereupon we too too readily build ſome calumnious report or other. If it ſhall therefore happen at any time, that we heare the ſlips & errors of another; let us not be delighted therein, but rather ſeek to cover them; for *he that covereth a fault, ſeeketh love. Prov.* 17.9. & not he, which deſireth to have them laide open. This is that which we ought to doe, both for the reſtoring and preſerving of charity; wherein wee muſt neceſſarily examine our ſelves before we come to partake with others at the Lords Table. If upon examination

we

we finde any thing wanting, either that we are not in charity with others, or others with us; let us according to these rules seek by all meanes to make good what is wanting, and so come.

CHAP. X.

Of Premeditation and Prayer.

THus of the first thing to be perform'd in our preparation, namely Examination of our owne fitnesse to receive. The second is the Premeditation of the benefits, which wee are to receive: which we must not omit, that we may the better be stirred up

up to ſeek God, and to communicate at his Table with joy and gladneſſe; for there is nothing which makes us more cold and backward in ſuch duties, than this, that we have not ſufficiently taſted how good the Lord is to thoſe which ſeek him; the conſideration whereof is alone able to move any man to a longing deſire after him. Wherefore, having ſearched into our own eſtate by a ſerious examination, leaſt wee ſhould yet fall back to a lukewarme careleſneſſe of what we are to doe, (to which the Divell will be ever ready to tempt us) and ſo become the more unfit to communicate at the Lords Table, either to

Gods

Gods glory or our own comfort, let us ever quicken our devotion with a seasonable premeditation, before wee come; of the benefits which wee are to receive by comming. All which are comprehended in this one word life; which wereceive in the Lords Supper, by receiving Christ, who is *Life itselfe*, *Ioh.*14 6.

Now the life of a Christian is either the life of Grace here, or Glory hereafter.

The life of Grace (which we obtaine in this Supper) consists of two things.

1, A happy freedome from a twofold evill: First, of sin; from which we are freed by the death of Christ: whose bloud

bloud (if wee relie on him) will make our ſinnes (though as red as ſcarlet) to become as white as wooll.

2, Of puniſhment; from which Chriſt hath redeemed us by the ſhedding of his bloud; ſo that *there is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, *Roman.* 8. 1. whence wee may boldly ſay, *who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died; yea rather that is riſen againe, who is eve̅ at the right hand of God, making interceſſion for us*, ver. 34

The ſecond thing is a comfortable enjoynment of a threefold good.

1, An inſeparable union both with Chriſt our head, *from whom nothing ſhal be able*

to separate us, *Rom.* 8. 38. as also with our brethren and fellow-members in Love and Charity; which *David* accounted *A good and joyfull thing*, *Psal.* 133. 1.

2, A blessed strengthning of our faith, whereof this Sacrament is a sure seale, (as before) whence it shall come to passe, that we shall be able to resist the temptations of the Divell, (who striveth by all means to make shipwrack of our faith aud us) and reply with *David*, *Ps.* 16. 9. *I have set God alwaies before me, for he is on my right hand, therefore shall I not fall*: this is that which *will make our hearts glad, and our flesh to rest in hope*: as it is *Vers.* 10. which bring.

bringeth in a third good, and that not the least, that God vouchsafeth to his people in this world, namely, Peace of Conscience.

This is that which wee are most carefully to seeke after, and which in the latter end, will be more worth unto us, than ten thousand worlds of pleasure which we can injoy: and therefore *Davids* counsell is, *Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last, Psal.* 37. 38. Now wherein can wee better keepe innocency, than by being carefully and faithfully exercised in Gods service? And what greater comfort of heart, and what greater

ter peace of conſcience can redound to a poore ſinfull ſoule, than the full aſſurance of the forgiveneſſe of his ſinnes, and his inſeparable union with Chriſt Ieſus? which we receive, if we receive aright, by receiving the Sacrament. This is that, beſides which there is nothing in us which ſhall bee able to ſtrengthen and comfort us againſt our enemy the Divell, in the day of our departure hence; who will then be ſure to affright us with the uglineſſe of our ſinnes (though now in policy hee cover them) that ſo he may, if it bee poſſible, drive us to deſpaire of Gods mercy towards us: then (I ſay) by the helpe of a

good

good conſcience, as *Samuel* reſolutely ſpake unto the Iſraelites, 1.*Sam.* 12.3. ſaying, *Behold, here I am; witneſſe againſt me, before the Lord and before his anointed; whoſe Oxe have I taken? whom have I defrauded? and I will reſtore it you:* ſo ſhall wee bee able to nonplus our calumniating enemy, and ſay: Behold, Satan, here I am, witneſſe againſt me before the Lord; wherein have I done thoſe evill things which I ſhould not have done? wherein have I omitted thoſe good duties which I ſhould have done? when did I at any time deſpaire of Gods mercy, or neglect the ſame? when did I prophane, or abuſe his holy Sabbaths?

Sabbaths? When did I contemne or neglect his word & Sacraments? here I am; witnesse against me: but my conscience tells mee to my comfort, that I have diligently, according to my power, performed what I ought, and therefore thou hast no part in me. If we can thus cleare our selves, then shall we bee able to say with S. *Paul.* 2. Tim. 4. 7. 8. *The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I haue finished my course, I have kept the faith*: and that which followeth hereupon, is, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousnes.* This Crown is that benefit, which we shal receive, after this life of grace is ended, in the life of

of glory. In the meane time, while we live here, we shall receive, though not this Crowne actually, yet the full assurance thereof, believing with S. *Paul, that it is laid up for us, which the Lord the righteous Iudge shall giue us at the last day.*

These are the benefits, which every true Communicant receiveth at the Lords Table: wherefore (as we desire to receive these beuefits, which passe all understanding) let us carefully meditate thereon, that we may bee inflamed wi'h the desire of them.

But (because all that wee can doe, is nothing without Gods blessing) we are in the

next place to pray to God, that he will bee pleased to blesse our endeavours, and to accept us in his Sonne; which is the third duty required of us in our Preparation: without the due performance of which, though otherwise we have diligently prepared our selves, we cannot expect to receive any comfort of soule with the Bread and Wine; because God onely giveth that unto us, and he is debter unto no man: let us therefore seek unto him by prayer for a blessing, who is the giver of all blessings. This we ought to doe first in private, setting aside some convenient times, wherein we may freely betake our selves to this duty:

but

but especially iu the morning, whē we are to receive, we should rise early and consider what we are to doe that day, namely, sit at the Lords Table, and therefore bee sure that we consecrate our selves to God by prayer and good meditations. Secondly in publique with the Congregation; where we ought to present our selves at the very beginning, that so we may joine together in all things which we are to performe, & there at our first entrance powre forth unto God (as at all other times) this, or the like Prayer.

O Lord strengthen me against the temptations of Satan who striveth to draw away my hart

from thee; & accept the prayers which I shall now make unto thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Which done, joyne with the Congregation in such prayers as are then used.

In both wee are carefully to consider two things.

1. For whom we ought to pray; and that is, not for our selves only, but others also, according to the Counsell of S. *James. chap.* 4. *v.* 16. *Pray one for another*, which wee learne from the patterne of prayer, the Lords prayer, left nnto us by Christ himselfe.

2, How we ought to pray; and that is, first in humility, with a feeling of our owne wants, for which the poore Publi-

Publican was *rather justified* then the proud Pharisee for his vaine boasting, *Luke* 18. 14. Secondly, in a setled and fervent devotion: when wee pray, our mindes ought not to bee fixed on any thing else, (as many, God knowes, are) for God will have the whole heart or none. 3, In faith; with confidence that wee shall receive what wee aske; for *he, which wavereth*, that is, not believeth, *Let not that man think that he shal receive any thing of the Lord. Iames*. 1. 7. If we be deficient in any one of these conditions, wee aske amisse, and so shall receive accordingly. Wherefore, as wee desire to receive benefit, and comfort

by the Lords Supper, let us seek unto God for it: and as we hope to have our prayers heard; let us pray both for our selves and others in true humility, fervency, and devotion, and assured hope of obtaining.

CHAP. XI.

Of Meditation at the Lords Table.

HAving thus fitted our selves by examinatiõ of our estate, premeditation of the benefits, and prayer for a blessing, wee may assure our selves that we have prepared our selves for the receiving of the Holy Communion, (though

(though by reason of our weakness, not in that measure, yet) in that right manner as we ought: and so have performed the first duty required of us, namely, diligent preparation; whereupon wee may boldly and cheerefully (otherwise not) present our selves unto the Lords Table: where we are to bee exercised in a second duty, namely, a seasonable Meditation.

This Meditation must bee threefold. 1, Before. 2, In the time of the Consecration. 3. After the same, or, in the time of Receiving.

Before the Consecration, when the Minister is going towards the Table, Meditate

on these 2 things. 1, Seeing the Table spread, and the Elements set thereon, we are to consider, what place wee are come unto; namely, the Table of the great King of Heaven and Earth: and that therefore wee ought most carefully and reverently, to behave our selves, both in body by a reverent and seemly gesture: and also in minde, laying aside all earthly cogitations whatsoever, and that in a twofold respect. 1, Because the place it selfe is holy, and therefore ought not to be prophaned by any unseemely behaviour; for these must be laid aside, as God commanded, *Exod.* 3. 5. *Put off thy shooes from off thy feet,*

feet. for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 2, Because as the place is holy, so also God himselfe is there amongst us, as he saith, *Mat.* 18.20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of thē.* Hee is in the midst of us beholding not onely our outward gesture, but our very hearts and affections; and ready both to reward those that honour him by reverencing, and to punish all such as dishonour him by prophaning and abusing his holy ordinance: which we shall doe if our carriage be not with fear and reverence.

2, When wee heare the Minister say, *draw neare and*

take this Sacrament; we must consider that God by his Minister freely inviteth us to his Table: then let every one lift up his heart by this or the like ejaculation.

Lord I am not worthy, by reason of my sins, to approach before thee; but seeing it hath pleased thee in mercy to call me behold, in humility and obedience I come.

Then joyne in prayer with the Minister. In the time of the Consecration wee ought seriously to settle our mindes on the Elements, and the Actions about them, for the better stirring up of our devotion: and so meditate thus.

1, When we heare the Minister read the words of Christs

In-

Institution, and see him take the Bread and Wine; wee ought joyfully and thankfully to meditate on the great love of God, in setting a part his Son for the redemption of us his enimies; in the taking of these Elements, and setting them apart to bee distributed unto us, as seales & pledges of the same: joyfully (I say) in respect of the benefit, which doth thereby come unto us, and thankfully in respect of Gods love, which is greater than all the hearts of men ioyn'd in one are able to expresse.

2, When we see the Bread broken, & the Wine powred out, we ought to be exercised in a twofold Meditation.

1, Of

1, Of comfort; considering that the Bread is broken, and the Wine powred out, not only to be the more divisible to the Communicants, but chiefly to represent unto us the crucifying of Christs Body, and the shedding of his Bloud for our sinnes: for *hee was broken for iniquities. Isai.* 53. 5. By which is not meant that any bone of him was broken, but that he was crucified: whence we should every one of us gather this comfort, saying to our souls: *Christ Iesus was broken on the Crosse, and suffered an accursed death for me; by whose merits, I trust, I shall escape the curse of that death, which is due for my sins unto me.* And here by the way

waywe may take notice how thePapists doe erre in delivering whole cakes unto the Cõmunicants, which represent Christ whol, not crucified, & so afford the lesse cõfort.

2, Of sorrow, and that for our sinnes; the grievousnesse of which was such that they could not bee satisfied for, without the pretious Bloud of *Christ Iesus*: these were the speares that pierced him to the Soule; that was that which drew his pretious Bloud from his side: and the consideration of this should breed in us a hearty sorrow, that we so vile wretches as wee are should thus wound so loving a Redeemer: and certainly if we doe not

not grieve for those sinnes, for which hee hath so much smarted, we may justly feare that the stupid Earth, the hard rockes, and the darke graves, which trembled, rent, and opened at his death, shall one day rise up in iudgement against us and condemne us. When therefore wee see the Bread broken, &c. let every one thus meditate; *O vile wretch that I am, that I by my sins should thus wound my mercifull and loving Redeemer!*

After the Consecration, when the Minister is receiving, himselfe (considering that we are in the presence of God, who seeth our very hearts) we should powre out our soules unto him in this or the like soliloquie.

O Sweet Iesu, I doe humbly acknowledge with the Centurion that I am not worthy, that thou shouldest enter under my roofe, much lesse to come & sup and dwell with me: but seeing it is thy good pleasure to vouchsafe me this favour, cleanse me, I beseech thee from my sins that I may entertain thee in a pure & sanctified heart, strẽgthen my faith that I may fully rely on thy mercy; comfort mee with thy blessed Spirit and so dwell with me for ever. Grant this, O blessed Redeemer, for thy mercies sake, AMEN.

Againe, before we receive when the Minister is comming to distribute, and offers the Elements unto us (considering that Christ with all his

his benefits is offered unto us by God, as well as the Elements by the Minister) let every one meditate thus with himselfe: *Christ with the benefits of his death doth now come to sanctifie and comfort my sinfull soule, in full assurãce whereof I am to receive these signes and seales at the hand of his Minister*; And so as hee stretcheth out his hand to receive these, let him lift up his soule in faith with this or the like ejaculation. *Come Lord Jesus unto thy humble servant as my trust is thou wilt.* This we are to doe after the Consecration, before we receive.

After this in the act of receiving wee are to performe these two things.

1. While

1, While we eat the Bread, meditate every one thus.

Blessed Iesu, I doe heartily believe that thou wast crucified on the Crosse, & that for me as well as for any other, &, as I have now received this Bread broken, whereby my Body shall be nourished: so I believe that I have also received spiritually thy Body crucified with all the benefits thereof; the full pardon of all my sins; and the strengthning and refreshing of my sinfull soule; this I believe, Lord, help my unbeliefe for thy mercies sake. AMEN.

2. When wee drinke the Wine, and while we feele it in our stomack, wee should thus meditate.

Most blessed Redeemer, I do truly

truely believe that thy Bloud was shed out of thy Body, as verily as I have received this wine apart from the bread; and that for the remissiō of my sins, as well as any others: & I doe also believe that with this wine I have received thy precious blood, whereby my sins are fully washed away & my soule purified: & that according to thy promise, I shall never hunger nor thirst anymore; because with this bread & wine I have receiv'd thy flesh, which is meat indeed, and thy blood which is drink indeed; with which I hūbly pray thee to cherish & nourish my poor soul, & to increase in me hearty love to these my fellow members, who have now participated with mee, that so

we

we may serve thee as we ought & that nothing may be able to separate us frō thy love, which I humbly beseech thee to grant for thy mercies sake. AMEN.

CHAP. XII.

Of Practice.

THis is that, whereon we ought to meditate in the time of receiving; which being duly performed, wee ought in the next place to take notice of a religious Practice of those things, which are to bee observed afterwards in our life and conversation.

These things may be reduced to two heads: namely, such

ſuch as we are to doe, 1. in the Church. 2, at home.

In the Church wee muſt performe two duties.

1; Having ended the former meditations, wee ought each man in particular to give thanks unto God for his mercy, in this or the like forme.

O Lord, I humbly bleſſe thy holy name, for that thou haſt in mercy vouchſafed to accept me at this thy Table amongſt the reſt of thy elect & choſen people, & that thou haſt ſo graciouſly fed my languiſhing ſoule with the precious body & bloud of Chriſt Ieſus. I *confeſſe, O Lord, that* I *am not worthy of the leaſt of thy favors: but ſeeing it hath pleaſed thee thus to*

have

have mercy upon me; give mee grace, I humbly beseech thee, to walk worthy of this thy mercy in newnes of life, to the glory of thy holy name, & the salvation of my sinfull soule; even for thy mercies sake. AMEN.

2, After this, every one ought to joyn with the Congregation in prayer and thanks-giving, praysing God for his goodnesse, and so depart lovingly together with joyfull hearts, that God hath so graciously entertained us his unworthy servants.

After we are come home, we are further to take notice of two duties.

1, Meditation, meditating seriously what comfort wee have received by being at the

the Lords Table. Vpon which consideration, if wee finde any good motions in our selves, any assurance of the forgiveneſſe of our sins, wee ought by all meanes to cherish the same by the comfortable remembrance of Christs death and Passion for us; and so much the more lift up our thankfull hearts unto God for his mercy; as S. *Paul* sweetly exhorteth the *Colossians*, saying, *as yee have received Christ Iesus the Lord, so walk yee in him; rooted & built up in him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving*, *Col.* 2. 6. 7. And this is that which *Solomon* maketh a true note of a righteous man, that hee will ever

ever bee increaſing thoſe good gifts, which hee hath in him: when hee ſaith, *Prov.*4. 18. *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more & more unto perfect day.* When therefore we ſhal find a litle faith, a litle love in us. (as, God knowes, the beſt of us hath litle enough) let us deſire to increaſe it, and to have our corruptions diminiſhed: for theſe deſires are a beginning of Grace, and a ſigne of a heart well affected: and of this deſire wee cannot make a better triall, than by conſidering whether wee long to receive againe the next time; that ſo theſe good beginnings may bee the more perfected.

But

But if wee finde not this comfort in us: let us ſearch into our ſelvs, whether there be not ſome ſinne in us as yet unrepented of, and whether wee came not ſo well prepared to the Communion as we ſhould, if ſo, then ought we to humble our ſelves before God, with ſorrow for this our negligence: if wee cannot ſee this in us, but that we came well prepared; then muſt wee patiently wait the Lords leaſure, and pray earneſtly that he will give us the comfort of his ſpirit, with full aſſurance that hee will grant our requeſt when it ſhall be beſt for us.

The ſecond dutie, wherein we muſt bee exerciſed at home

home, is a resolution or constant purpose of leading a new life, whereunto S. *Paul* earnestly invite th us, *Rom.* 6. 19. saying, *As you have yielded your members servants to uncleanesse, and to iniquity, unto iniquity, even so now yeeld your members servants to righteousnesse unto holinesse*; and why? *because being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, wee have our fruit* (not unto sin, but) *unto holynesse. v.* 22. Shall we then bee made free from sin, and become the servants of God, and yet returne unto sinne againe? God forbid: if we doe so, *we receive the grace of God in vaine*; which S. *Paul* be-

ſeecheth the Corinthians to take heed of. 2. *Cor.* 6. 1. now what is it but to receive the Grace of God in vaine, when after we have *eſcaped the pollutions of this world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour* Ieſus *Chriſt, wee are again intangled therewith*; &, as the Sow to the mire, return to our former courſe of life again? S. *Peter* will aſſure us, that *it had beene better never to have known the way of righteouſneſſe, than, after wee have known it, to turn from the holy Commandement delivered unto us*. 2. *Pet.* 2. 21. And well were it, if this were duly conſidered of ſome, who think it ſufficient to live preciſely

cifely that day, in which they receive (though perhaps they can ſcarce doe that) and preſently afterwards live as prophanely and looſely as ever they did; but we muſt know that God expects a daily reformatiõ of thoſe, which preſent themſelves at his Table; and, if we doe not duly conſider of it, wee ſhall one day with feare and trembling acknowledge it; as S. *Paul* plainly tells the Hebrews; ſaying, *If we ſin wilfully after we haue received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certaine fearefull looking for of judgement and fiery indignation.* *Heb.* 10. 26. 27.

Now that we may the better lead a new life before God, wee must consider that to the direction of a Christian life, three things are to be known of us.

1. What wee are to pray for.
2. What we ought to believe.
3. What we are to doe.

The first being rightly knowne, affords us a perfect direction for our Hope: the second for our faith: the third for our Piety.

The first we have fully set downe in the Lords Prayer, composed by Christ himselfe as a most exact rule for all our Prayers.

The

The second in the Creed, which containeth the Articles of our Faith, contained in the Doctrine of the Apostles; called therefore the Apostles Creed.

The third in the Tenne Commandements, written by the finger of God himselfe, and revealed unto us in his holy Word, to be our direction both for our holinesse towards God, and our charity towards our neighbours.

These three rules of our life (the Lords Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandements) are daily repeated of those of the meaner and more simple sort, but yet (God knowes) not so

well understood, as they should be, by divers to whom God hath given a greater measure of knowledge: never did our Land, yea almost every house, more freely abound with fruitfull & comfortable expositions upon these rules, than now they doe: yet who lookes so farre into them, as to know thereby the full extent of any of them? Some few indeed there are (whereof God increase the nũber) who make a conscionable use of those good meanes of Salvation: whereas others are well content, yea with delight desire to read (and that upon the best dayes) vain and idle discourses,

courſes, which are ſo farre from furthering us in the way of Salvation, as that (like tares) they choak the Word of God, & hinder the growth thereof, as wee too often ſee by our daily experience. There is indeed a time for all things; for pleaſure as well as profit: but ſhall we ſpend the beſt of our time, yea (as ſome do moſt miſerably) the greateſt part of our time in ſuch vanities, and altogether neglect thoſe good helps for our direction; eſteeming them too plain and homely, or not pleaſant enough for our witty inventions, & acute judgements? Let ſuch know; that they, which thus neglect

their owne good, are guilty to themſelves of a twofold crime.

1, Of unnaturall wrong unto their own ſoules, in ſtopping their eyes from beholding the light of Salvation, which otherwiſe would ſhine unto them; dealing herein as injuriouſly with themſelves, as Papiſts doe with their deceived Laity; trayning them up in ignorance and blinde devotion.

2, Of a twofold ingratitude: 1, towards thoſe painfull Authours, which (like fruitfull lights) have ſpent themſelves for the directing of others, whoſe labours doe well deſerve to be accepted amongſt

amongst us: and wee shall prove our selves but unthankefull members of the Church, wherein we live, if wee make not that good use of those lights, for which they were intended.

Secondly, (which is the greatest) we shew our selves unthankefull towards GOD himselfe, who hath in mercy raised up such meanes for the helping of our infirmities; whereof others, better deserving than our selves, have been destitute. Having therefore such helpes so freely offered unto us, let us (if we desire to live more righteously before God) use them more carefully than we have

done: endeavoring in the first place to know what is contained in each Petition of the Lords Prayer; that so, whē we pray, we may know what that is, for which wee pray; and secondly, for our Faith, to know the full extent of every Article thereof; that so we may truely understand what that is, which wee confesse we believe: and because both of these are litle available, except our piety bee such as it ought to bee, let us especially bee exercised in the Commandements of God; that thereby wee may understand what wee are commanded, and what forbidden. These are the direct courses

courses which every true-hearted Christian ought to take, and which will one day prove truely comfortable, when others, vain and frivolous, deceive us.

But because our Piety and religious behaviour is the chiefest thing required on our part unto the leading of a new life, let us further see what rules wee may yet observe for the directing thereof.

This Piety of ours is seene in these two things. 1. Our Words. 2. Our Workes and Actions.

As for our Words, wee should follow the counsell of Saint *Paul* to the Ephesians, which

which is, that we avoyde in our talke, *all filthinesse, all foolish talking, and jestings which are not convenient. Ephes.5.4.* and hee giveth a very good reason for it. 1.*Cor.*15.33.*because evil communications corrupt good manners*; and that oftentimes both in the speaker and hearer. But some will say, what? must we never use any pleasant discourses? no iesting at all? yes, there is a time for that also; so it bee according to the rule of Saint *Peter*, such *as God may thereby be glorified.* 1.*Pet.*4.11. other waies we may not stirre up our mindes we may to an honest cheerefulnesse by civill and modest iesting; but ob-

obſcene and prophane, which S. *Paul* cals filthineſſe; vaine and idle, which hee termes fooliſh talking, and ieſting; which is not convenient; ſuch I ſay, *ought not to be once named amongſt us as becometh Saints:* for hereby both ſpeaker and hearer are often ſtirred up to looſe and vaine geſtures, or at leaſtwiſe to conceive and think of them, and ſo Gods name is much diſhonoured. Miſerable it is to obſerve how frequently ſuch ſpeeches doe paſſe for currant under the aſſumed titles of merry diſcourſes: but let us remember what our Saviour Chriſt hath ſaid. *Matt.* 12.36.37. that *by our words*

we

we shall be iustified, and by our words we shall be cōdemned, & that every idle word, which we shall speak, we shall give an account thereof in the day of iudgement: Must wee give an account of our words, and shall wee not then bee carefull of them? Must wee answer for every idle word, and shal we fill up our discourses with blasphemies, with obscene and scurrilous jestings? if wee must give an account of them, certainly these will lie heavy upon us: Wherefore let us rather with *David* set a *watch before our mouth, and bridle up our lips, that wee offend not in our tongue*: let us be carefull that our words be such

ſuch, as *Solomon* commendeth *Prov.* 25.11. *fitly ſpoken, which are like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver*; that is, ſuch words, as containe wholeſome matter, and are ſpoken in a comely and decent manner, are as acceptable and pleaſant to the eare of a judicious hearer, as ſilver pictures, adorned with golden apples; are unto the eye of the beholder.

For our Works, wee muſt, as S. *Paul* counſelleth, *walk as children of the light, ever proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.* Eph. 5. 8. 10, *having our converſation honeſt among men, that they ſeeing our good works, may glorify God thereby.*

How

How to direct both our Words and Actions aright, wee must chiefly observe these two things. 1, How to avoid that which is evill in both. 2, How to seeke and obtaine that which is good.

To avoide that which is evill, foure rules are especially to be observed.

The first concernes the beginnings of evill; namely, that wee watch and pray, according to our Saviours coũsell and practice. *Matt.26. 41. least we enter into temptation*, and so be drawne away to sinne against God; for of our selves we are prone therunto, and unable to avoid it: and if it goe so far that we be once

once tempted to finne, and feele in us any motion thereunto, wee should endeavour to resist this temptation in the beginning, and reason thus with our selves; Did not I lately receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, where I had a full pardon of all my sinnes (past) sealed unto me, and where I vowed and promised to lead a new life before God, how then can I doe this thing, & breake my promise with God? I have put off my coat of sin, and therefore I may not (I will not) put it on again: thus ought wee to resist temptations at the first, least they get the dominion over us.

The

The ſecond rule concernes the occaſion of evill, which wee muſt neceſſarily avoid, if we deſire to avoid the evill it ſelfe.

The occaſions are diverſe, but eſpecially theſe two.

1, Idleneſſe, from which proceed many (and theſe ſometimes haynous and crying) ſinnes; which the Son of *Syrach* calleth therefore *the teacher of much evill, Eccleſ.* 33.27. To avoide this, wee muſt bee carefull to employ our ſelves diligently in that vocation, wherein God hath placed us; for otherwiſe the Divell will be ſure to take an occaſion to tempt even the beſt of us: as we ſee in *David*, who

who was a man after Gods owne heart; and yet, when he was walking on the roofe of his house (while *Ioab* and the rest were in the battle) he was tempted to commit adultery with *Bathsheba* the wife of *Vriah*, 2. *Sam.* 11. 2. and how many doe we daily see drawn away to lasciviousnesse, drunkennesse, and such like vices by this occasion? Let us therefore carefully exercise our selves in our Vocation, that the Divell may not have an opportunity to set upon us.

2, Bad Company, than which nothing almost is more forceable to drawe us away to that which is evill? Let

Let *Ioseph* but live in *Pharaohs* Court, and he shall soone learne to sweare by the life of *Pharaoh*. *Gen.*42. 15. and *if Israel abide in Shittim, the people will soon commit whoredome with the daughters of Moab*. *Num.*25. 1. wherefore God cōmandeth his people to *goe out of Babylon, least they bee partakers of her sins*. *Rev.*18.4. and often are wee partakers of other mens sins, by frequenting their society; yea, (which is miserable to observe) diverse of ingenuous disposition and civill behaviour, have by degrees bin drawne away to loosenesse and riot, by associating themselves unfortunately with vaine

vaine and diſſolute perſons. And wee may herein obſerve the policy of our enimy the Divel; who, when he findeth any man well diſpoſed of himſelfe, and not ready to yeeld to others temptations, will beſet him (if he can poſſibly) with this ſnare, that ſo he may either by the wicked perſwaſions or bad examples of others, ſteale away his heart, and allure him to that which is evill, which ſhould bee a forceable Caveat unto us, to make us heedfull what company wee fall into, and with whom we acquaint our ſelves, if we have any care of our ſoules: ſeaſonable is the counſell of *Solomon* herein, who

who adviseth us, 1, concerning the examples of others, not to conforme our selves unto them *by walking in their waies, but to avoid and passe away, Prov.4.15.* 2. Concerning their allurements, by no meanes to harken unto them; *if sinners intice thee, cõsent thou not. Prov.1.10.* If they say, come let us take our pleasure in this or that sort, let us goe to such a place, where wee may freely doe what we will: *If they thus draw thee, walk not in the way with them, refraine thy foot from their paths.* 3, As for familiarity with others, hee adviseth us to *make no friendship with an angry man, & with a furious*

furious man not to goe. Why? *least thou learn his way, & get a snare unto thy soule. Pro.22. 24. 25.* Wilt thou avoide gaming, swearing, &c. then shun that company wherein those vices are practised, or else thou wilt rather increase them in thee. But some will say, such an one is my familiar friend, and shall I leave him? that will bee taken unkindly; shall I get my self discredit, where I may avoid it? Yes, be he never so neere unto thee, yet if hee in his courses forsake God, forsake thou him, lest God forsake thee: yea thou maist therein shew thy selfe a very friend to him, in winning him from his

his evill waies by thy forsaking of him; for so saith Saint *Paul*, 2. *Thes.* 3. 14. *If any man obey not our word, note that man, & have no company with him, that he may be ashamed:* it may be when hee seeth thee leave him, he will beginne to thinke of his bad life, and so be ashamed of it, and by degrees leave it: therefore leave bad company for their sakes also, as well as thine owne.

The third rule is, how we may restrain our selves when wee are about to undertake any sinfull action: and that is, by setting before our eyes this Caveat, *God sees: for his eyes are over all. Prov.* 15. 3 & therfore whatsoever we doe,

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we ſhould conſider that wee doe it in his preſence: which, being conſcionably conſidered, cannot but breed in us both reverence and watchfulneſſe; reverence in reſpect of his Majeſty; watchfulneſſe in reſpect of his all-ſeeing Eye, that we offend him not, who will eſpy in us the leaſt fault, be it never ſo ſecretly kept from the world.

Againe, conſider how mercifull God hath ever bin unto thee, in delivering thee from this or that danger, from this or that ſinne, wherinto thou muſt neceſſarily have fallen, if he had not upheld thee; and then anſwere

the Divell whē he tempteth thee, as *Ioseph* did his wicked mistresse; *how can I doe this wickednesse, & sin against my God?* God hath been thus and thus mercifull unto mee, and shall I yet offend him & provoke him to anger? God forbid.

The fourth rule is for our direction, when we are fallen into any sinne; which is this. Whē we are overtaken with any sin (as who is not every day?) we should presently lament it, and not suffer it to goe on any farther, least it come to a custome, and so stick fast in us: this is a difference which *Solomon* putteth between the righteous and the

the wicked. *Prov.* 24. 16. *A just man* (saith he) *falleth seavē times & riseth up again, but the wicked shall fall into mischief:* the just man, though he fall into any sin, riseth again by repentance; but the wicked sinketh deeper downe, even to the pit of destruction.

These are the chiefest rules to be observed for the avoyding of that which is evill.

¶ The next thing, which we must look into, is, how wee may obtaine that which is good. Heere we must principally observe these two things: 1. make use of all occasions thereunto: 2. make conscience of every good

duty. As for the first, wee must first, according to the example of S. *Paul Phil.* 3. 14 *use all diligence that we may presse on towards the mark*; still endeavouring to be better: and when we find our selves deficient in the performance of any good duty (as God knowes we are in all) we should doe the same again and endeavour to performe it more fervently; that so we may come to a greater measure of goodnesse. Againe, we should gladly embrace the company of good men, that by their example and advise we may be brought to a sense and feeling of those sinnes, which we commit; coun-

counting it a great blessing of God, if thereby we at any time be crost in those sinnes, to which we are most addicted, as gaming &c. and ever esteeme best of that company, not where our eares may be filled with prophane jestings, or tickled with superfluous conceits; but where our corruptions may be most roundly reproved; esteeming them our best friends, that will most plainly and faithfully put us in mind of our errors; which is the counsell of Saint *Paul* to the Thessalonians; *I beseech you* (saith he, 1. *Thes* 5. 12. 13.) *to know thē which labour among you, & are over you in*

the Lord & admonish you; and to esteeme them very highly in love for their works sake: which may be our directiõ for esteeming both of our familiar friends, and of our teachers; both which (if faithfull) labour for our good in the Lord by admonishing us; and both thereby deserve from us a true regard as a recompence of this their love: therefore if any man desire to be furthered in good duties; let him testify it by loving such men.

2. If we desire to obtaine that which is good, we must be carefull that we make conscience (as of avoiding every evill)

evill) so of doing every good duty, be it never so litle; *endeavouring* with Saint *Paul to have alwaies a conscience void of offence towards God & mẽ: Act.24,16.* and labouring to keepe not onely some but all Gods commandements, according to *Davids* wish, *Psal. 119.5.6 O that my waies were made so direct; that I might keep thy statutes, so shall I not be confoũded, while I have respect to all thy cõmandements:* Let us not deceive our selves in thinking it sufficient, that we observe the Sabbath, and that we offend not God by swearing, stealing, or such like hainous offences; and yet in the mean time make no

conſcience of a lye for our commodity, or of vaine and idle diſcourſes for delight; for, if we thus doe, it is certainly an argument of a bad heart.

But ſome perhaps will ſay If I thus endeavour to carry my ſelfe in all things, if I now and then doe not give a little way, I ſhall be accounted too preciſe and curious in matters which I need not. Be it ſo; yet be willing to undergoe that cenſure; and eſteeme it ſafer to offend ungodly men by thy good life, than a righteous God by thy bad life: and though others account it too much preciſeneſſe, yet doe not thou ſo; but

but rather consider that God commandeth us *to keep his Precepts diligently. Psal.* 119. 4. if diligently, then certainly there is nothing in his precepts superfluous; nothing, which we may doe or not do, but every one, though of never so small a matter, is to be performed of us: whosoever therefore shall endeavour to his power to keep the Commandements of God in every thing, is so farre from being too precise, that hee doth but what hee is commanded.

To these rules, for avoyding of evill and seeking of good, wee may adde one more, as the rule of all the

rest, and of our whole life; & that is the Word of God: which alone is able to direct us in the way to salvation, as *David* testifieth *Psal.* 119.9. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? even by ruling himself after thy word.* wherefore let us carefully read, meditate and conferre, about this Word, and that often; accounting (as well we may) every day lost, wherein wee learne not something out of it; ever desiring more and more to be instructed therein, & account it a great blessing of God, that we have the use of it so freely to direct us in the way of salvation. Neither let any man think himselfe

ſelfe ſo learned, that he needeth no farther inſtruction; for the beſt of us comes ſhort of *David*, & yet he prayed ſtill to *be inſtructed in the word of the Lord*; as wee may ſee throughout the 119 *Pſalme*. Againe, if we did know more than we doe, yet we are dull in the performance of what we know; and therefore we have need to read the ſame againe and againe, to ſtirre us up to a daily practice hereof. But that we may ſo uſe the Word of God, as that it may be unto us the ſavour of life unto life; let us at all times, when we are about to read it, lift up our hearts to God by prayer, that he may give

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a blessing to our endeavours, without which whatsoever we doe in this or any other thing, it will be so farre from being profitable unto us, as that it will rather prove our ruine in the end.

Hee, which shall thus set his heart to serve the Lord by denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, by living honestly, righteously and soberly in this present world; hee, which shall thus carefully receive the Sacrament in a right manner, and heare the Word with diligence, devoting himselfe to God by prayer in all things, which hee doth; hee which shall thus make conscience of his waies

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in every thing; the bleſſing of God reſt upon him as it needs muſt; and that peace of conſcience, which no man knoweth but he that enjoyes, ever attend him here, and everlaſting peace & happineſſe crowne him hereafter.

Amen.

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